





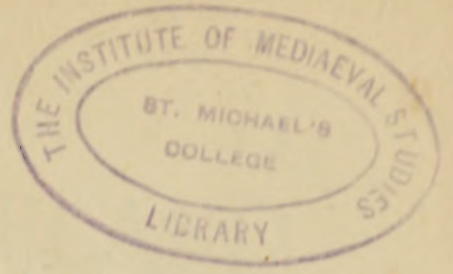


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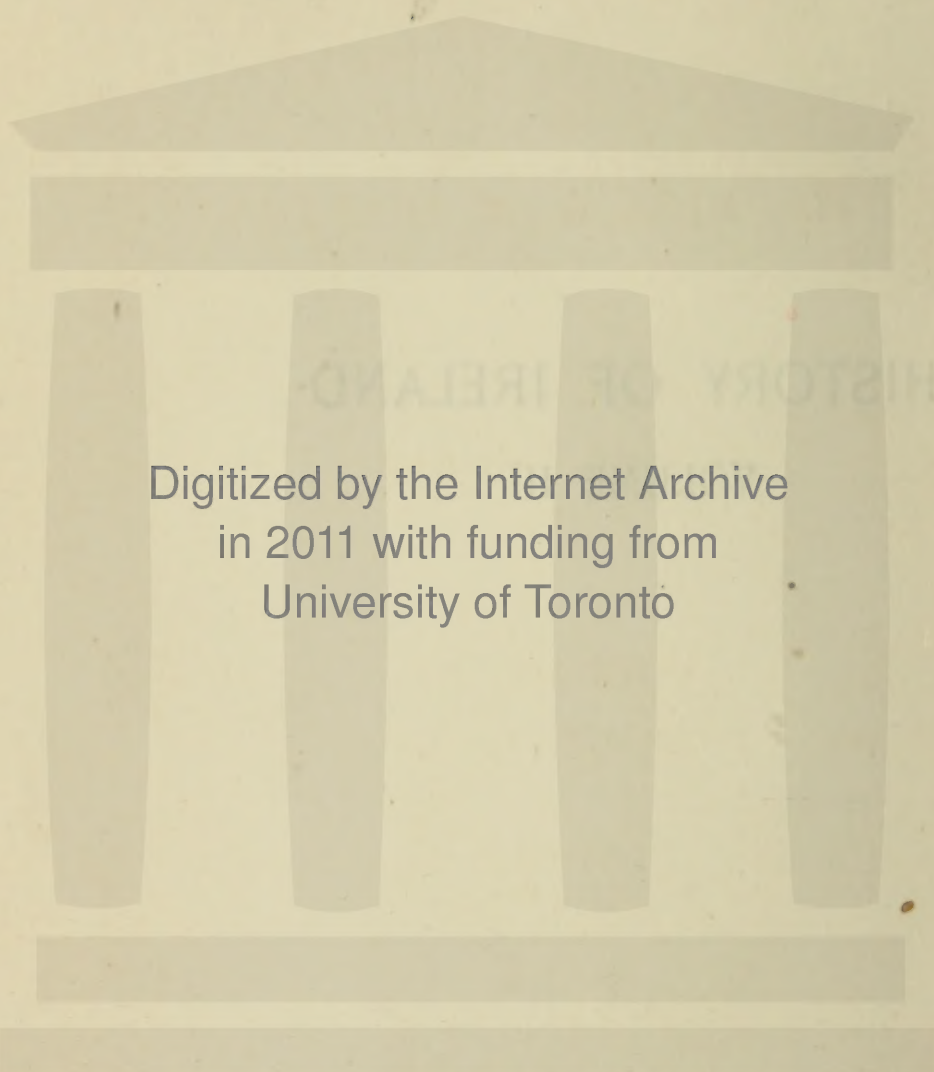






# HISTORY OF IRELAND

VOLUME III



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# HISTORY OF IRELAND

FROM THE EARLIEST TIMES  
TO THE PRESENT DAY

BY

THE REV. E. A. D'ALTON  
LL.D., M.R.I.A.

*IN THREE VOLUMES*

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# HISTORY OF IRELAND

## CHAPTER I

### *Grattan's Parliament*

THE year 1782 was a memorable one in Irish history. For the first time for centuries the Irish Parliament was a reality and not a shadow, a legislature with the power to legislate. Poyning's Act was gone, and so also was the Act "for better securing the dependency of Ireland upon the Crown of Great Britain," whereby the English Parliament asserted its right to legislate for Ireland, and took away the appellate jurisdiction of the Irish House of Lords.<sup>1</sup> The Irish Mutiny Act had been assimilated to that of England; a Judge's Tenure Act made the Irish judges independent; a Habeas Corpus Act secured a speedy trial for prisoners, and put an end to capricious imprisonment; Irish trade ceased to be hampered by vexatious commercial restrictions; and there was a further and substantial relaxation of the penal laws. This was doing much in a short time, but much remained yet to do. The Catholics still laboured under grievous restrictions, and being excluded from Parliament and deprived of the Parliamentary franchise were placed beyond the pale of the Constitution. The farmer was crushed under the weight of excessive rent, and ground down by the extortions of the tithe-farmers. Parliament itself was unrepresentative and corrupt. Jobbery and speculation abounded.

<sup>1</sup> Plowden's *Historical Review*, i. 249 (copy of the Act).

Justice was the privilege of the rich rather than the right of all. And in all these directions there was a wide field for the employment of the newly-acquired legislative powers. There were, further, many inequalities of taxation, infant industries to be fostered and new ones to be called into existence, and decayed manufactures to be revived. Nor was the Irish Parliament unequal to the task of righting so many wrongs and curing so many ills if we remember the abilities of some of its members. Grattan and Flood, Yelverton and Bushe, Daly and Burgh, Foster and Fitzgibbon, and many others were not unworthy of the English Parliament at its best ; and Grattan's eloquence raised him to a level with Pitt and Fox and Burke.

Unanimity and public spirit only were required, and had these been secured the progress of beneficent legislation would have been rapid. But at the very outset serious difficulties arose. In May 1782, in answer to the Viceroy's speech, Grattan, in the exuberance of his gratitude for the concession of legislative rights, spoke eloquently of the sincerity, the generosity, the magnanimity of Great Britain ; declared that the repeal of the Act of 1719 was a measure of consummate wisdom and justice ; and that there were no longer any constitutional questions between the two nations.<sup>1</sup> Flood was not disposed to be so enthusiastic. Jealous of Grattan's fame, and not unwilling to belittle his services, he saw no reason for gratitude, and maintained that the simple repeal of the Act of 1719 effected nothing. That Act was a declaratory law, and as such it did not change the law but only declared what it was ; it was to secure the better dependence of Ireland, showing that she was already dependent. A repeal of such an Act was a repeal of the declaration, not of the legal principle ; it was simply expunging the declaration of power to legislate from the English Statute Book ; the right to legislate was dormant, but might at any time be revived unless it was now formally renounced ; and it was a Renunciatory Act and not simple repeal which was required. He added, and with emphasis, that England still claimed the power to legislate externally for

<sup>1</sup> *Irish Parliamentary Debates*, i. 356-7.



Ireland, that is, she still claimed supremacy over the whole field of marine and commercial legislation.<sup>1</sup> Flood's powers of exposition and reasoning were unsurpassed, and the case he made was undoubtedly strong, and yet in a House of 214 members only two others supported his views. Grattan's motion was passed with enthusiasm, and so angry did he feel that his work should be thus belittled that he moved: "That the legislature of Ireland was independent, and that any person who should propagate in writing or otherwise an opinion that any right whatever, whether external or internal, existed in any other Parliament, or could be revived, was an enemy to both kingdoms."<sup>2</sup> This motion, so subversive of free speech, was withdrawn and a milder one passed, though the sense of the House evidently was that the question should not even be discussed.

But if agitation of the question was thus ended in Parliament, discussion could not so easily be stifled beyond its walls. In the English House of Lords, Lord Abingdon reaffirmed the supremacy of the British Parliament in all matters of external legislation, and Mr. Fox was thought to favour the same view. In two Acts just passed in England, Ireland was expressly named, and therefore included; and appeals were still heard from Ireland in the English House of Lords, and in the English King's Bench by Lord Mansfield.<sup>3</sup> All these things generated doubts and suspicions of English good faith; the alarm spread to the Volunteers, and from the Volunteers to the people; Flood's views gained ground; outside Parliament his popularity rapidly rose as that of Grattan rapidly declined; and in 1783 the English Parliament itself took the matter in hands, and a Renunciation Act was passed "for removing and preventing all doubts which have arisen, or may arise, concerning the exclusive rights of the Parliament and Courts of Ireland in matters of legislation and jurisdiction, and for preventing any writ of error, or appeal, from any of His Majesty's

<sup>1</sup> *Irish Parliamentary Debates*, i. 359-71, 406-10, 421, 460-62.

<sup>2</sup> *Irish Debates*, i. 466.

<sup>3</sup> *Grattan's Memoirs*, ii. 350-55; *Flood's Memoirs*, pp. 163-6.



Courts in that kingdom from being received, heard, and adjudged in any of His Majesty's Courts in Great Britain."<sup>1</sup>

In the preceding year Flood's position among the patriots in Parliament was one of isolation. Grattan had charge of the Mutiny Bill, and of the greater question of legislative rights; Yelverton of the repeal of Poyning's Act; Forbes of the independence of the judicature.<sup>2</sup> Since then the share taken by Flood in the debates on renunciation and simple repeal had placed him first in popular affection, and when a new question of popular rights arose it was in his hands the question was placed. This was Parliamentary reform. It had been taken up warmly by the Volunteers, first at Lisburn in July by delegates from forty-five companies, then at Dungannon in September by delegates from the Volunteer army of Ulster, after which the same question was considered at a National Convention at Dublin, composed of delegates from the whole Volunteer army of Ireland. The Convention was presided over by Lord Charlemont.<sup>3</sup> The delegates met at first in the Royal Exchange, after which they marched to the Rotunda. They were all Protestants, members of Parliament, peers, country gentlemen; some of lesser position and perhaps of extreme views, but the great majority men of moderate views and substantial position. Among them as delegate from Derry was a remarkable Englishman, Lord Hervey, Bishop of Derry, an English nobleman and an Irish Bishop, rich, generous, eccentric, of somewhat volatile disposition, the friend of the Catholics, the foe of the corrupt oligarchy who ruled the Parliament. Fond of show and splendour, he passed through the streets dressed in purple, with diamond knee and shoe buckles, his carriage drawn by six horses covered with purple cloth. His escort was a troop of dragoons under command of his nephew, George Robert Fitzgerald, who by education ought to have been a gentleman, but who in reality was a lawless ruffian, who swindled and cheated and swaggered and fought duels and terrorized his tenants and neighbours in Mayo, and who was

<sup>1</sup> Plowden, ii. 20.

<sup>2</sup> *Grattan's Memoirs*, ii. 345-6.

<sup>3</sup> Plowden, ii. 28-42.

ultimately hanged at Castlebar in 1786, and ought to have been hanged at a much earlier date.<sup>1</sup>

From the chairman to the humblest in the assembly every delegate knew that reform was urgently required. Of the 300 members of Parliament, 124 were nominated by 53 peers, 91 others by 52 commoners. There were but 6 voters in some boroughs, in others twice that number. These boroughs were openly sold by the landlord, a seat in Parliament costing £2000, the permanent patronage of a borough bringing as much as £8000. With 100 members of Parliament, either pensioners or placemen, entirely dependent on Government, and with 200 members returned by little more than 100 persons, and with the Catholics excluded both from Parliament and from the franchise, such a legislature was a mockery of representation.<sup>2</sup> In the Convention there was no lack of plans of reform, some crude, some extreme, some moderate, some practical. Lord Hervey strongly advocated the franchise for Catholics, but was strongly and successfully opposed by Charlemont and Flood. On that question both were narrow-minded and illiberal, and while willing to tolerate Catholics and protect their properties, they would grant them not the least measure of political power.<sup>3</sup> Under the influence of these two reaction and bigotry carried the day. A Reform Bill was agreed to, and Flood, by direction of the Convention, went with it straight to the House of Commons, dressed in the uniform of the Volunteers. His proposals were certainly not extreme. Only Protestants were to have votes, and even of Protestants only those who were resident for at least six months out of twelve and possessed a certain amount of freehold or leasehold property; the bounds of decayed boroughs were to be extended to the neighbouring districts; pensioners were to be ineligible for a seat in Parliament, and placemen under the Crown should vacate their seats and submit to re-election; and Parliament itself was to be elected triennially.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Hardy's *Charlemont*, pp. 262-3; Lecky's *Ireland*, ii. 363-70.

<sup>2</sup> Plowden, ii. 57-64; Lecky, ii. 347-8.

<sup>3</sup> Lecky, ii. 371.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* 372-3.



Had the Irish Government been anxious for Parliamentary reform ; had the Volunteers and the patriots in Parliament acted together cordially ; had the Catholics not been excluded ; had Flood and Grattan co-operated, this measure and even a greater one could have been passed. But every one of these conditions was wanting. As the mouthpiece of the English Ministry, the Government did not want a reformed Parliament, but rather one dominated by pensioners and placemen, which would be submissive and compliant. A reformed Parliament, on the contrary, would be responsive to popular influences and less under Government control. Flood ought to have well known that such power as the borough-mongers possessed would not be surrendered except under pressure of some great national upheaval, or when the borough-mongers were menaced by an armed force, and yet he would rely only on Protestant support and fight only for Protestant rights. Even some of the patriot opposition had grown jealous of the power of the Volunteers, and resented dictation from an armed assembly, unmindful of the fact that it was the swords of the Volunteers rather than Grattan's eloquence that had won legislative independence. The exclusion of the Catholics from the plan of reform lost to the movement the impetus of national enthusiasm. Lastly, Grattan and Flood had become the bitterest enemies. The estrangement begun on the question of the Renunciation Act had ripened into open warfare. Grattan had voted for an increase in the army ; Flood had angrily opposed it, and, calling Grattan a mendicant patriot, was answered in a speech of terrible power, told to his face that he had long been silent and silent for money, and that he was not an honest man.<sup>1</sup> In spite of these differences Grattan supported Flood's Bill, though not with enthusiasm ; but Yelverton, who from being a patriot had become a placeman, led the opposition with great eloquence and skill. He would have no Bill which originated with the Volunteer Convention ; let the Volunteers, whom he respected, return to their occupations, turn their swords into ploughshares, and leave the business of legislation

<sup>1</sup> *Parliamentary Debates*, ii. 40-43.



in those hands where the law had placed it. The whole forces of reaction and corruption mustered to his call, and by 158 to 77 votes even leave to introduce the Bill was refused.<sup>1</sup> The Volunteer Convention was then quietly dissolved. Charlemont's advice was then taken—to hold county meetings and rely on speeches and resolutions and petitions, and the Bill was again introduced by Flood in March of the following year. It reached the second reading, but was then rejected by 159 to 85 votes.<sup>2</sup> A further motion made by Flood in the next year was negatived without a division; and so determined was the Government's opposition that the Sheriff of Dublin, for presiding at a reform meeting, was prosecuted and fined.<sup>3</sup> It was useless to agitate the question further, and Flood and his friends lost courage, concluding that with such influences at work the reform of such a Parliament was but a dream.

While the Volunteers were holding meetings and passing resolutions, many other matters besides Parliamentary reform were debated and discussed in Parliament: the violence of the press, the outrages done to soldiers, the character of the recently formed Volunteer corps, many of whom were Catholic and poor, the distress among the people. Grattan attacked the excessive expenditure in the collection of the revenue,<sup>4</sup> but he also attacked the violence of the press, voted for the formation of a national militia, and described the Volunteers as having degenerated from being the armed property to being the armed beggary of Ireland.<sup>5</sup> Much also was said on questions of trade and commerce, on imports and exports, on bounties and protective tariffs. It was widely believed that nothing could effectually aid struggling industries and relieve the distress which prevailed but the imposition of protecting duties; and in April 1784 Gardiner moved that such duties be imposed.<sup>6</sup> He was opposed on the part of the Government by Foster, who claimed that his own corn

<sup>1</sup> *Parliamentary Debates*, ii. 226-64.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* iv. 22-37, 372.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* iv. 41.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* iii. 43-85.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* ii. 213.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* iii. 130.

law, passed a few months earlier, would meet the case. Its leading provisions were a bounty of 3s. 4d. on each barrel of exported corn until the price reached 27s., after which, until the price reached 30s., no import duty was put on British corn; and when the price went beyond 30s. no corn was to be exported, and all imported corn was to be admitted duty free.<sup>1</sup> The effect of the measure was considerable. Pasture-lands were broken up, sheep and cattle gave place to men, the rusty and silent mill-wheel was set in motion, population rapidly increased, and Ireland entered on a period of agricultural prosperity such as she had never known before.<sup>2</sup>

But the imposition of tariffs remained still for settlement, and now the whole question of the commercial relations between Ireland and Great Britain was taken in hand. The position was peculiar. In all matters both of internal and external legislation the Irish Parliament was supreme, subject only to the necessity of having her Bills passed under the Great Seal of England. Sometimes, indeed, Irish Bills when sent to England were not returned, and to this extent a veto on her legislation could be imposed;<sup>3</sup> but to all intents and purposes the power of the Irish Parliament was equal and co-ordinate with that of Great Britain. With such power Ireland might have her consuls at foreign seaports and her envoys in foreign capitals; she might adopt a separate foreign policy and negotiate separate treaties; she might insist on being friendly where England was at enmity and on being at enmity with England's friend; she might refuse to follow England into war; she might refuse to contribute to her navy; and if she provoked hostility with some foreign power with whom England was at peace, who was to repel an invader from her soil? who was to guard her coasts? who was to defend her ships on the open sea? These possibilities of misunderstanding and conflict were foreseen in 1782 by the Duke of Portland. He had hoped by negotiation to have

<sup>1</sup> *Parliamentary Debates*, ii. 289-90.

<sup>2</sup> Lecky, ii. 383-91; Newenham, *The Population of Ireland*, pp. 46-50.

<sup>3</sup> Lecky, ii. 335-6.



the Irish admit a distinction between what was imperial and what was local, to acknowledge the supremacy of the British Parliament in matters of trade and commerce, to induce them in return for the protection of their trade to contribute to the general support of the Empire. Lord Rockingham's hopes and wishes were similar.<sup>1</sup> But Grattan refused even to negotiate until legislative independence had been conceded.<sup>2</sup> The people, he thought, would not tolerate delay; the sympathy of the English Whigs might cool; English national pride and commercial jealousy might gather strength; the Irish patriot members might be corrupted, or disagreements and weakness might creep into their counsels.<sup>3</sup> For these reasons there was no negotiation. So far no conflict between the two nations had arisen; but the possibility of such remained, and the threat to impose protective duties showed that there was danger.

In 1785 Mr. Pitt was Prime Minister of England and Mr. Orde was Chief Secretary for Ireland, and between these two, chiefly by Pitt, a scheme was elaborated, and being embodied in 11 resolutions was introduced into the Irish Parliament. They became known as Orde's Commercial Propositions. Based on reciprocity, they were to be a readjustment of the commercial relations between the two countries, their chief provisions being that the manufactures of each country were to be admitted into the other duty free, or at the same rate of duties if duties were imposed; and the same provision held for goods imported from the colonies or from abroad, which merely passed through one country to the other. Imports from one country were to be favoured in the other in preference to foreign goods, and so also were the imports from the British colonies. The restrictions of the Navigation Act were to cease. Bounties on native manufactures were to be discouraged, and if continued in one country were to be met by countervailing duties in the other. Finally, when the hereditary revenue exceeded £656,000, and when this sum

<sup>1</sup> *Charlemont Papers*, i. 90-92; *Grattan's Memoirs*, ii. 286-94 (Letter from Portland to Shelburne).

<sup>2</sup> *Grattan's Memoirs*, ii. 277.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 228-9.



was sufficient in times of peace for the expenses of government, the surplus was to go to the support of the British navy. Some other minor provisions there were which were not so clear, and which puzzled even some of the members. Grattan supported the whole Propositions; Flood, however, opposed them, without however going to a division, and the Propositions therefore passed, and with such cordial goodwill on the part of the members that new taxes to the amount of £140,000 were raised, so as to enable Ireland to meet her contribution under the scheme.<sup>1</sup>

Introduced into the British Parliament, the Resolutions had a stormier passage. The English manufacturers declared that if free trade with Ireland became a reality, Irish labour, which was cheap, would soon flood even the English markets with Irish goods, and as for the English foreign and colonial trade, its ruin would be certain. In deference to these complaints Pitt modified his scheme and expanded the 11 Resolutions to 20, the new ones being much less favourable to Ireland than the old. Ireland was now to be cut off from all share in the carrying trade of the Eastern seas, for the monopoly of the East India Company was to be maintained, and the vast expanse of water extending from the Cape of Good Hope to the Straits of Magellan would be interdicted to Irish ships. In the future she was to re-enact without change all navigation laws made by the British Parliament and all laws regulating foreign and colonial trade. Not so much perhaps for love of Ireland as to embarrass Mr. Pitt, Sheridan attacked the New Resolutions as a repeal of the Renunciation Act; and Fox described them as bartering English commerce for Irish slavery.<sup>2</sup> But in spite of this opposition they passed by large majorities, and, being thrown into the form of a Bill, were introduced in August into the Irish Parliament, where they were fiercely assailed. Flood and Grattan acted together, and both were at their best. They objected to the Bill because it would shut out Ireland

<sup>1</sup> *Irish Parliamentary Debates*, iv. 116-32, 172-209.

<sup>2</sup> Plowden, ii. 117-36; Lecky, ii. 448.

from the East Indian trade ; it would hamper her intercourse with the colonies and with foreign nations ; if it was reciprocity, said Flood, it was a one-handed reciprocity ; and Grattan denounced it as an attack on the constitution, as "an incipient and creeping union." Leave to bring in the Bill was carried only by 127 to 108 votes, a majority so small at such an early stage that the Bill was abandoned, and the last was heard of Orde's Commercial Propositions.<sup>1</sup>

Less than two years later Mr. Orde again tried his hand at legislation. Irish education was then in a backward condition. The Act of 1537 directing that a school should be established in every parish was a dead letter. The Charter Schools were an acknowledged failure, and so also were the Erasmus Smith Schools. There were no technical schools, and the classical schools in the various dioceses were not efficient. Orde proposed a series of resolutions covering the whole field of education. The Act of 1537 was to be revived and put in force, and in each parish a school was to be maintained by the Protestant minister, supported by a tax on the minister's income and by a tax on the richer landlords of the parish. The funds of the Chartered and Erasmus Smith Schools were to be gradually diverted to maintain four provincial colleges in which technical education of a higher kind was to be imparted. There were to be twenty-two diocesan colleges where classics and the sciences were to be taught, and, fed by these diocesan colleges, were to be two great academies in which exhibitions and scholarships were to be founded for clever boys, and through which boys were to pass to the university. Finally, there was to be a second university, somewhere in Ulster. To this latter provision Hely Hutchinson took exception, declaring the sufficiency of Trinity College ; and objection was also taken to the whole scheme, inasmuch as no provision was made for either Catholic or Presbyterian. Orde replied that they could go to all these schools and colleges—they were not specifically excluded ; but, as the teachers were to be Protestant and were to teach

<sup>1</sup> *Debates*, v. 330-443 ; Ashbourne's *Pitt*, pp. 116-48.



Protestantism, the exclusion of other denominations was sufficiently secured. The Resolutions passed in their entirety, and Orde hoped that early in the next session of 1788 he would embody these Resolutions in a Bill. But in the interval the Viceroy, the Duke of Rutland, died, and was succeeded by the Marquis of Buckingham, with whom Mr. Fitzherbert came over as Chief Secretary. Orde's term of office therefore expired before the session of 1788 had come, and his resolutions on education, like his resolutions on commerce and trade, never took legislative form.<sup>1</sup>

In the meantime there was a recrudescence of Whiteboyism in the Munster counties, and at last it became so serious that it attracted the attention of Parliament. An English traveller declared in 1775 that Whiteboy outrages came from excessive rents and excessive tithes, and now, eleven years later, the same thing was true.<sup>2</sup> It was said in Parliament, both by Mr. Longfield and by Mr. Curran, both of whom lived in Cork, that in that county at least the outrages had been much exaggerated;<sup>3</sup> but there is no doubt that disturbances had arisen and that crimes had been committed; that unlawful oaths were administered; that men had been dragged from their beds and carded, or buried in a hole lined with thorns; that in some cases men's ears had been cut off; and that threats and terrorism prevailed. A Parliament in sympathy with the people would have traced back these outrages to their proper causes and done something to allay discontent. But as long as Parliament was dominated by the Government, and the Government by its chief law-officer, John Fitzgibbon, it was safe to say that there might be repression, but there was little chance of remedial laws. In 1783, Yelverton from being Attorney-General became Chief-Baron, and Fitzgibbon stepped into his place. The grandson of a peasant, his sympathies were entirely aristocratic; the grandson of a Catholic, his hatred of Catholicity was extreme. His character, says Barrington,

<sup>1</sup> *Parliamentary Debates*, vii. 489-511; Seward's *Collectanea Hibernica*, ii. 147-56.

<sup>2</sup> Twiss's *Tour*, pp. 142-3.

<sup>3</sup> *Debates*, vii. 23-30.



had no medium. A strong man, he trampled on the weak ; of the highest capacity, he despised mediocrity ; tyrannical, arbitrary, overbearing, he scorned to conciliate or to persuade ; in the law courts he browbeat, he bullied, he insulted ; in Parliament he was insolent, sarcastic, openly and brutally abusive ; in the councils of Government he was autocratic and peremptory, and usually succeeded in bending others to his own imperious will. Indifferent to the applause or the censures of the people, he was absolutely without fear, championed freely what was unpopular, set his face like flint against all reform either in Church or State, took pensioners and placemen under his wing, defended every abuse, advocated every violence of authority or prerogative, embittered the masses of the people against the Government, and ultimately drove them to madness and to rebellion. To such a man the Whiteboy outrages were not a reason for curbing the tithe-farmer and the rack-renter, but for the passing of a Coercion Act. He admitted indeed that the people had much reason to complain ; that in Munster, which he knew well, they were ground to powder by rack-renting landlords who exacted from their tenants as much as £6 an acre for their little holdings, and compelled them to pay rent by working for fivepence a day.<sup>1</sup> Yet his prescription for these ills was a Riot Act of savage severity, the chief provision of which was that if twelve or more persons assembled together, and being ordered by any magistrate to disperse failed to do so within an hour, they were each liable to the punishment of death. He proposed, further, that whenever oaths had been administered at any Catholic Church the building was to be levelled to the earth. Grattan described this clause as stabbing the criminal through the sides of his God, and the whole Bill as being written in blood. In deference to his objections Fitzgibbon omitted the clause, and limited the measure to three years, and with these limitations it passed in all its severity.<sup>2</sup>

With outrages of any kind Grattan had no sympathy, and to the greater part of Fitzgibbon's Act he offered no serious

<sup>1</sup> *Parliamentary Debates*, vii. 58-59, 63.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 181-5.

opposition. But it is poor statesmanship to rely altogether on repression when there is question of admitted wrong ; and in 1787 and the two following years Grattan frequently brought the question of tithes before Parliament. He studied the matter carefully and was complete master of his subject, and the picture he drew of oppression and misery was certainly dark. The exemption of grazing lands threw the whole burden of tithes on the 'poor, tithes of corn and cabbage and potatoes and turf, tithes that were often greater than the rent. On the tithe-farmer and tithe-proctor he was specially severe. The former was an extortioner by profession, who paid for the privilege of making a bad use of an unsettled claim ; the latter was "a wretch who follows his own nature when he converts authority into corruption and law into speculation."<sup>1</sup> In some cases the crop was ruined waiting to be valued, in some cases overvalued. The proctor often levied 2s. in the £ for proctorage, or he got free labour, and if he had a shop it was woe to the farmer who refused to deal with him. From the Bible, from the fathers of the Church, from ancient and modern history, sacred and profane, Grattan drew his arguments ; and he set them forth with such copiousness of knowledge, such mastery of detail, such wealth of imagery, and in such vivid and picturesque language, that the case he made was irresistible. But his labour was labour in vain. His motion for a commutation of tithes in 1787 and again in 1788 was rejected, as was his Bill to exempt flax and potatoes and barren lands.<sup>2</sup> He also attacked the Dublin Castle Act by which police were substituted for watchmen, with the result that matters had become worse ; for under the watchmen the city had been robbed on cheaper terms.<sup>3</sup> And he supported Mr. Forbes in his oft-repeated attacks on the pension list.<sup>4</sup>

In these contests we miss the name of Flood. Since 1783 he was a member of the English Parliament, and since 1785 had not appeared in the Parliament at Dublin. But he made

<sup>1</sup> *Parliamentary Debates*, vii. 341, viii. 195.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* viii. 192, 445-60, ix. 442-64.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* viii. 302.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* vii. 320, viii. 68-69, 353-74.



no great impression in England, nothing commensurate with his great talents. In Grattan's fine phrase, he was an oak of the forest transplanted at fifty, too old, it would seem, to root itself in a foreign soil ; and for the few years until his death in 1791 he was often silent on great questions, and at no time played a distinguished part. But if Flood's voice was silent at Dublin, another one was often raised in the ranks of reform, and by the side of Grattan and Forbes and others no voice was more eloquent than that of John Philpot Curran. He was one of the few men who had the courage to face Fitzgibbon, and to face him on equal terms. He had less knowledge of constitutional questions than Flood, and was less effective in Parliamentary debate, but, unlike Flood, he was the friend and even the champion of the Catholics. The sustained brilliance of Grattan was not his, but there are passages in his speeches not inferior to the finest of Grattan's, and it is probable that Grattan would have never won at the bar the position of Curran, who was perhaps the ablest advocate of his time. But neither the efforts of Forbes nor the genius of Grattan or Curran could make any impression on the corrupt ranks of the Government. The pension list grew until it reached the enormous total of £100,000 a year, and was, in Curran's words, a museum of curiosities.<sup>1</sup> New names were put on as old ones dropped off, additional offices were created, and peerages were openly and shamelessly sold ;<sup>2</sup> and if there were promises of retrenchment made by the Government, as sometimes there were, these promises were not seriously given, and were not meant to be fulfilled.

It was during the Viceroyalty of Buckingham, in 1789, that George III. became insane. As his son, the Prince of Wales, was of age, it was on all hands agreed that he should be appointed regent, with the powers of the first estate of the realm. The Prime Minister, Pitt, wished to proceed by Bill, and wished also to limit the regent's power and patronage ; while Fox, who was unpopular with the King but was the special favourite of the Prince, wished to proceed by address,

<sup>1</sup> *Curran's Speeches*, pp. 59-60.

<sup>2</sup> Seward, ii, 216, 220-21.



simply asking the Prince to take upon himself the government of the kingdom during the King's illness, and unfettered by limitations or restrictions. The debates on the question in the English Parliament were long and able and acrimonious, and ultimately Pitt carried a series of resolutions, which he proceeded to embody in a Bill.<sup>1</sup> But the views of Fox were more popular in Ireland. Grattan thought that to proceed by address was more in keeping with the constitution of 1782. His sympathies were with Fox and the Whigs on public questions; he disliked Pitt, and thought that to proceed by Bill would be to take directions from England. The popular party shared his views; and some of the borough-mongers, believing that George III. would never recover, that Pitt would soon get his dismissal and Fox take his place, and that the Prince of Wales being regent, would be the source whence pensions and places would come, hastened to worship the rising sun. So formidable a combination was not to be resisted, and in spite of the threats of Buckingham and the very able case made by Fitzgibbon the Irish Parliament decided to proceed by address. The Viceroy refused to forward it, and delegates were sent from Parliament instead. They were cordially and gratefully received by the Prince; but by that time the King had recovered his reason, and with it his power.<sup>2</sup> Fox and his friends in England were in consequence depressed, as were Grattan's friends in Ireland; while Buckingham and Fitzgibbon were elated, and the time had come for rewarding friends and for punishing those who had deserted them in their hour of need. The great office of Lord Chancellor, then vacant, was given to Fitzgibbon, who was also made a peer; the placemen who had supported Grattan were dismissed; new places were created and new pensions; new peerages and baronetcies were conferred; the majority of Grattan in Parliament melted away; and when Buckingham resigned office, in the end of 1789, the Government was again strong and corruption was triumphant and uncontrolled.<sup>3</sup> This was the

<sup>1</sup> Plowden, ii. 208-27.      <sup>2</sup> *Parliamentary Debates*, ix. 40, 72-84.

<sup>3</sup> Lecky, ii. 483-5; Seward, ii. 213-14; Plowden, ii. 279-80.

state of Ireland when, early in 1790, a new Viceroy, the Earl of Westmoreland, crossed from England.

During these years nothing had been done for the Catholics. The Catholic Association founded by Curry, O'Connor, and Wyse had done its best, but its best was little. A purely Protestant Parliament thought it had been generous in passing the Acts of 1778 and 1782; and it is certain that the latter Act would have been much more liberal but for the opposition of Charlemont and Flood, still more perhaps on account of the objections raised by Fitzgibbon that to repeal the Penal Code would be to repeal the Act of Settlement.<sup>1</sup> The same influences were at work in the years that followed, and though Grattan was sympathetic nothing could be done. Nor did the Catholics make any serious effort to assert themselves. From time to time they merely presented addresses of loyalty and congratulation, suing humbly for concessions.<sup>2</sup> In the Catholic Committee Lord Kenmare was one of the leaders, but he was spiritless and incapable; and Dr. Troy, Archbishop of Dublin, another leader, was anxious above all not to irritate Dublin Castle, and though freely condemning the Whiteboys he had no words of condemnation for the tithe-farmer and the rack-renter.<sup>3</sup> It seemed useless to look to Parliament for redress. The Whig Club, formed by Grattan and others in 1789, wanted a limitation of places and pensions and Parliamentary reform, but, chiefly owing to Charlemont, it did not put Catholic Emancipation on its programme. The Chief Secretary refused when asked to take the question into consideration; even a Catholic petition would not be received in Parliament, nor a Catholic address at Dublin Castle.<sup>4</sup>

But great events were taking place on the Continent of Europe. The mighty upheaval called the French Revolution was in progress. A sorely oppressed people had at last turned on their oppressors. The noble's chateau and the King's palace were plundered with a will; the courtly abbé, who

<sup>1</sup> *Parliamentary Debates*, i. 307.

<sup>2</sup> Macnevin's *Pieces of Irish History*, p. 18.

<sup>3</sup> Lecky, ii. 403-404.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* iii. 22-23.



neglected his duties and often disgraced his office, had brought ruin on his Church and its ministers; the King was made responsible for evils which he inherited and did not create, and was unable to remedy; and altar and throne were overturned. On the ruins of both a French Republic had arisen, a republic which deified nature and reason, abolished all religious disabilities, declared such payments as tithes immoral, pronounced all men to have equal rights; and to every nation that was oppressed and wished to assert its freedom this new republic was ready to lend its aid. These novel doctrines had their effect in Ireland. The Volunteers were still strong in Ulster, and they heartily approved of the French Revolution, and demanded Parliamentary reform and Catholic enfranchisement; and the Society of United Irishmen, which was formed at Belfast in 1791, aimed at bringing about these reforms by bringing Catholic and Presbyterian together.<sup>1</sup> The Catholic Committee, tired of presenting petitions and addresses, adopted so bold and manly a tone that Lord Kenmare and sixty-eight others who wished to be friendly with the Castle seceded from its ranks.<sup>2</sup> It then passed under the guidance of Mr. Keogh, a Dublin merchant of ability, who, despairing of the Irish Parliament, had a deputation sent to England to lay their grievances at the foot of the throne. Large concessions had just been made to the English Catholics, and the English Ministry wished the Irish Parliament to be equally liberal. Even Burke, who hated the French Revolution with his whole soul, and by his writings had changed so many English reformers into reactionaries, favoured the cause of the Irish Catholics, and sent his son to Dublin to aid them. But the Irish bigots would not surrender a single inch of ground. Fitzgibbon in the Lords, and Foster, the Speaker, in the Commons were all-powerful, and were equally able and equally bigoted; the Viceroy and the Chief Secretary became the willing tools of these selfish bigots, and only after the strongest pressure from England was an Act passed in 1792 admitting Catholics to the bar, legalizing marriages between Catholics and Protestants,

<sup>1</sup> Lecky, iii. 13-15.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 23-27.



allowing masters more than one Catholic apprentice, and permitting Catholics to erect and endow Catholic schools.<sup>1</sup>

Such grudging concessions were of little value, and even the most moderate Catholic could not accept them as a settlement of Catholic demands. A "Digest of the Popery Laws" made by Mr. Butler for the United Irish Society showed that the Catholics were still a degraded sect.<sup>2</sup> Feeling this themselves, the Catholic Committee had delegates selected from the different parishes in Ireland, and early in December a Catholic Convention commenced its sittings in Dublin.<sup>3</sup> The bigots called it derisively the Back Lane Parliament, and every effort was made to discredit its proceedings and to identify it with sedition. Fitzgibbon and Foster resumed their old tactics of stirring up opposition to all concession, and at Grand Jury meetings had resolutions passed denouncing the Catholics and exciting Protestant fears.<sup>4</sup> And the Dublin Corporation declared that Protestant ascendancy must be maintained, and this it defined to be—"a Protestant King of Ireland, a Protestant Parliament, a Protestant hierarchy, Protestant electors and government, the benches of justice, the army, and the revenue, through all their branches and details, Protestant; and this system supported by a connexion with the Protestant realm of England."<sup>5</sup> Neither Pitt nor Dundas, the Home Secretary, was unfriendly to Protestantism; but such undiluted ascendancy as this could not be maintained in an age when the cry for equality was so much abroad. The new French Republic had developed unexpected strength. The cannon of Kellerman had hurled back the Prussians at Valmy; Dumouriez at Gemappes had played equal havoc with the Austrians and laid Belgium at the feet of France; and soon after Louis XVI. was led to the guillotine, and France declared war on England. And meanwhile French principles were making headway in Ireland. The Ulster Volunteers celebrated the fall of the Bastille. A new armed body had arisen in Dublin—the

<sup>1</sup> Lecky, iii. 40-42, 54-55; Plowden, ii. 351-64.

<sup>2</sup> Macnevin, pp. 122-40.

<sup>3</sup> Plowden, ii. 384.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* 376-7.

<sup>5</sup> Macnevin, p. 29.

National Guards—the buttons of their uniforms with an Irish harp surmounted by a cap of liberty instead of a crown.<sup>1</sup> The relations between the United Irish Society and the Catholic Committee had become so friendly that Keogh became a United Irishman, while Wolfe Tone became Secretary to the Catholic Committee;<sup>2</sup> and when the latter body sent delegates to London to the King with a Catholic petition, they were welcomed on their way at Belfast with enthusiasm, and had their carriages drawn through the streets amid thunders of applause.<sup>3</sup> Pitt and Dundas thought it enough to have war on the Continent without also having rebellion in Ireland; and Fitzgibbon and his friends were told plainly that if rebellion broke out the intolerant claims of Protestant ascendancy would not be supported by English arms.<sup>4</sup> And then a strange thing happened. The Protestants, whom the Viceroy and the Chief Secretary had pictured as seething with discontent, determined to die rather than yield, quickly gave way; and a Bill was passed in February 1793 giving Catholics the Parliamentary and municipal franchise, and placing them in other respects on a level with Protestants, except that they were still excluded from the great offices of State and from the high judicial positions.<sup>5</sup> Fitzgibbon in the Lords made a bitter speech against the Bill, though he did not divide the House. He helped, however, to spoil the effect of the conciliatory measure by having an Act passed declaring the Catholic Convention illegal, as well as all such conventions which might be held in the future.<sup>6</sup>

Meantime the question of Parliamentary reform had been vehemently agitated. Grattan and the Duke of Leinster, in 1792, had founded a new association—The Friends of the Constitution—which, unlike the Whig Club, favoured complete Catholic Emancipation as well as Parliamentary reform.<sup>7</sup> Year after year, in speeches of wonderful power, Grattan

<sup>1</sup> Plowden, ii. 381-4.

<sup>3</sup> Plowden, ii. 388.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* ii. 141-2; Plowden, ii. 421-6 (copy of the Act).

<sup>6</sup> Plowden, ii. 429-30.

<sup>2</sup> Lecky, iii. 108.

<sup>4</sup> Lecky, iii. 127-9, 134.

<sup>7</sup> Lecky, iii. 122-3, 147-8.



brought the latter question before Parliament. He had succeeded, indeed, in having an Act passed compelling pensioners during pleasure and a large number of placemen to vacate their seats when they accepted these pensions or places. An Act was also passed limiting pensions; and the hereditary revenue, like all other portions of the National finances, was made subject to Parliamentary control. In addition to these measures the poorer cabins were exempted from the hearth money, and the *regium donum* was increased; this latter measure, no doubt, being intended to wean the Presbyterian clergy from French opinions. But nothing could induce the majority in Parliament to abolish the rotten boroughs. Fitzgibbon and his friends repelled with vigour every assault on the sacred citadel of monopoly, and though Grattan was supported by Ponsonby and Parsons, and with great ability, he was in every instance outvoted; and in the session of 1794 Ponsonby's Reform Bill was defeated by more than three to one, showing that the question had receded rather than advanced.<sup>1</sup> And meantime England was at war with France; the Catholics, being still excluded from Parliament, were dissatisfied; outrages were common in Ulster; disaffection was everywhere among the Ulster Presbyterians, and had already made some progress in the ranks of the Catholics.

At this date an important section of the English Whigs went over to Pitt and were given office. The Duke of Portland became Home Secretary, having Irish affairs in his department, and Lord Fitzwilliam became Lord-Lieutenant, and came over in the first days of January 1795. What followed became afterwards the subject of much debate and has never been satisfactorily explained. It is certain that both Portland and Fitzwilliam understood the acceptance of office to mean a change in the policy of the Irish Government. It is certain that they were the special friends of Grattan and Ponsonby, and that these two came to London to consult with Fitzwilliam, urging the retirement on pension of Fitzgibbon as the first step towards any measure of reform. It is certain that this

<sup>1</sup> *Parliamentary Debates*, xiv. 62, 74-77, 100-104, 108.



was mentioned by Fitzwilliam to Pitt, and that at first he did not object, though afterwards he did. It is certain that the English Ministry desired Fitzwilliam, on coming to Ireland, not to advocate Catholic Emancipation; but if he could not prevent the question being agitated he was to support it. It is certain that no mention was made of the matter in the speech with which Parliament was opened, but that, nevertheless, the tide of Catholic agitation ran so high that it was useless to try and roll it back; and therefore when Grattan introduced a Bill into Parliament the Viceroy determined to support it. It is certain that he so informed his colleagues, Pitt and Portland, and that neither raised any objection. Then when Catholic expectation was at its highest they interfered, and Fitzwilliam was recalled. Why he was allowed to go so far and then was recalled has never been made clear. It may be because he dismissed from office a rapacious office-holder named Beresford, who had influence in England, and especially with Pitt. It may be that the great Minister was influenced by the King himself, to whom Fitzgibbon had already pointed out that to allow Catholics to sit in Parliament would be to violate his coronation oath. At all events, it is certain that the King requested Pitt to recall Fitzwilliam. It may be also that Pitt changed his mind, and, already meditating a union, was averse to Catholic concession. It is most likely that Fitzwilliam managed the question badly, and that had he proceeded more cautiously he might have succeeded. But after all this is said Pitt stands condemned, and the special pleading of Lord Rosebery on his behalf will not avail.<sup>1</sup> Certainly the difficulties did not come from the Irish Protestants. Outside of the corrupt junta in Parliament they were everywhere in favour of Catholic Emancipation, and Fitzgibbon himself admitted that Grattan's Bill would have been carried in Parliament.<sup>2</sup>

It was an unfortunate episode. It brought consternation into the Catholic ranks, and filled all with forebodings of coming ill. When Fitzwilliam left for England in March his carriage was drawn by the people to the water's edge; the

<sup>1</sup> Rosebery's *Pitt*.

<sup>2</sup> Plowden, ii. 466-500.

shops were closed as on a day of general mourning ; a period of hope was over, to be succeeded by a period of discontent and despair.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Plowden, ii. 503-11 ; Lecky, iii. 238-324 ; Ashbourne's *Pitt*, vi. ; *Beresford's Correspondence*, ii. 51, 57. Beresford appealed to Auckland, who appealed to Pitt on his behalf. Fitzwilliam had dismissed him because he thought that no Viceroy could tolerate a man with such power. "He had made a Lord Chancellor, a Lord Chief-Justice, an Attorney-General, a Commander-in-Chief, and nearly a Primate." He was at the head of the revenue, the law, the army, and much of the Church.

## CHAPTER II

### *The United Irishmen*

THE elation produced throughout Ireland by the concession of legislative independence was soon followed by dejection and discontent in the minds of large masses of the people. The constitution which so often received the highest encomiums of Grattan and his friends was, after all, but a poor copy of that of England. It contained, for instance, no provision by which a change of policy would involve a change of Government; and it was noted by the people with displeasure that those who had vehemently opposed all popular concessions were continued in office. The unrepresentative character of the Irish Parliament remained, and after 1782, as before it, a few great families dominated both Houses, and could defeat any popular measure when they pleased, that is, when for selfish motives they coalesced. The rejection of Flood's Reform Bill disgusted the Protestant reformers. The insults flung at the Volunteers both by Parliament and Government deepened their disgust. The refusal to impose protective tariffs disappointed many; and it was some time before the beneficial effects of Foster's corn law appeared, and meantime the agricultural interest complained. The maintenance of a bloated pension list and the continued creation of sinecure offices disgusted all. Dublin complained of inefficient watchmen, and though the police system which succeeded was more expensive to maintain, life and property were not on that account made more secure. In the years 1783 and 1784 the worst relations existed between the soldiers and the citizens. The soldiers when called upon to suppress disturbance were unduly harsh; the Dublin butchers retaliated by houghing soldiers, when a chance of doing so offered; and a special Act of Parliament had to be passed



making these crimes a capital offence. Dublin merchants importing English goods, and Dublin artisans working for low wages, were sometimes tarred and feathered by their fellows, and when a man guilty of inflicting this indignity was being flogged through the streets, the mob violently interfered and were fired on by the soldiers, one man being killed and several wounded.<sup>1</sup> These outrages, however, were confined to Dublin, and soon disappeared, though, no doubt, much of the discontent remained. The crimes of the Whiteboys in Munster, two years later, were also put down by the savage Riot Act of Fitzgibbon, and in the middle of 1787 the Duke of Rutland declared that all Munster was peaceable except Cork, which remained partially disturbed.<sup>2</sup>

In the meantime disturbances had arisen in Ulster. In 1785 two Armagh Presbyterians had a quarrel, and a Catholic bystander took sides with one, enabling him to overcome his opponent. The defeated party vowed vengeance against that Catholic and all Catholics, and was soon able to stir up his co-religionists against them. Religious factions were thus set in motion. The Presbyterians insisted in having the law enforced which denied a Catholic the use of arms, and banding themselves together under the name of Peep-of-Day Boys, they appeared at break of day at the houses of the Catholics and forcibly took away any arms the Catholics possessed. Resenting these indignities, the Catholics joined together under the name of Defenders. The Volunteers, being for the most part Presbyterian, joined the Peep-of-Day Boys, and some newly-formed Volunteer corps refused to admit any Catholics into their ranks. Armed conflicts soon followed in which sometimes as many as one thousand men were engaged on each side, and in which blood was freely shed. Gradually the area of conflict extended. By the year 1788 the whole county of Armagh was agitated by these feuds, and in the years that followed similar disturbances arose in the adjacent counties, until all Ulster was torn with strife and discord.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Plowden, ii. 79-80; Lecky, ii. 392-3.

<sup>2</sup> Lecky, ii. 463.

<sup>3</sup> Plowden, ii. 200-202.

In the beginning, at all events, the Defenders were not the aggressors, and the obvious duty of the Government was to restrain the Peep-of-Day Boys, while at the same time carrying out the law as to the use of arms among their opponents. But this duty was not discharged. The Defenders became an organized and oath-bound society, and being almost wholly illiterate, they were without intelligent leaders who might keep them under control. Ceasing to be on the defensive, they sometimes became the aggressors, and when two troops of soldiers were sent to Armagh, in 1790, to put them down, they offered armed resistance, and fifty of the soldiers were killed.<sup>1</sup> The fact was that the Irish Government did not want these disturbances ended. If Catholics and Dissenters were united the demand for reform might become urgent, and the demand of a united people could not easily be denied. But while factions continued, a corrupt Parliament and a corrupt Government went on their way unchecked. As for the efforts at reform of the Whig Club, and of its more liberal successor the Friends of the Constitution, they were treated by Fitzgibbon and his friends with disdain.<sup>2</sup>

But in 1791 a Society was founded in Belfast which filled the Government with greater alarm. In that city democratic principles had long been fostered. Presbyterian in religion, republican in spirit, its sympathies had been with the revolted American colonies, and not a few from Belfast had fought for American freedom. In that city the first Volunteer Association was formed to protect the country against invasion, these associations being subsequently used to win commercial and legislative independence. Belfast had been urgent for Parliamentary reform, and at the Volunteer Convention of 1783 the Belfast delegates demanded Catholic Emancipation as well as Parliamentary reform.<sup>3</sup> Nowhere else had events in France been followed with keener satisfaction; and in 1791 Belfast celebrated the fall of the Bastille with enthusiasm, with speeches and addresses and resolutions with

<sup>1</sup> Plowden's *Historical Review*, ii. 275-7.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 386-7.

<sup>3</sup> Madden, i. 114.



eulogies on Washington and Tom Paine and the Rights of Man.<sup>1</sup> Since the beginning of 1790 there was a branch of the Whig Club in the city of which Charlemont and Mr. Robert Stewart (Lord Castlereagh) were members; but its demand for further freedom for non-Catholics, which it would deny to Catholics, was felt to be little in harmony with the spirit of the time. There were many who wished to go further, and one of the most respected of the citizens, a woollen draper named Samuel Neilson, founded a small society in the summer of 1791 which was intended to bring together all classes and creeds. "Our efforts for reform," he said, "have been hitherto ineffective, and they deserved to be so, for they have been selfish and unjust, as not including the rights of the Catholics in the claims we put forward for ourselves."<sup>2</sup>

It was at this date that Theobald Wolfe Tone first appeared on the stage of Irish politics. He was then twenty-eight years of age, born in Dublin, educated at Trinity College, and called to the Bar in 1789. His talents were considerable. But he was lazy, and though he read much, he studied little; he was restless, daring, adventurous, and at one time, and this after he was married, he had seriously proposed to establish a colony on one of the South Sea Islands, at another time to enlist as a soldier in the service of the East India Company. Having no taste for the law, he turned his attention to politics, and in 1790 wrote a pamphlet in defence of the Whig Club, which the Belfast Society so much valued that they brought out a large edition at their own expense.<sup>3</sup> Among Tone's many friends there was none to whom he was so much attached as Thomas Russell, at one time in the service of the East India Company, but in 1791 a captain in the 64th Regiment, then stationed at Belfast. Like Tone, Russell was a patriot and a democrat, and, resigning his commission, became a member of the Whig Club and of the Volunteer Association. Knowing that the

<sup>1</sup> Lecky, iii. 9-10; *Pieces of Irish History*, p. 9.

<sup>2</sup> Madden, iv. 4-5.

<sup>3</sup> Wolfe Tone's *Autobiography*, i. 16-24.

latter body favoured the Catholics and wished to pass a declaration in their favour, but were unable to agree as to its terms, he asked Tone to draw up a suitable declaration. This was done. Nor was this the only product of Tone's pen in 1791, for in September of that year he published *An Argument in Favour of the Catholics of Ireland* over the signature of "A Northern Whig." He wrote with contempt of the Revolution of 1782, pointing out that three-fourths of the people were still without a vestige of political rights, that nothing but the strenuous efforts of the whole nation could purify Parliament, and that no such effort could be made until all sects acted together. His arguments were put with such force that Dissenters and Catholics were equally impressed, and not less than 10,000 copies of the pamphlet were sold.<sup>1</sup> By the Catholic Committee he was entertained at a public dinner, and in October he was invited, through Russell, to Belfast, and there founded the Society of United Irishmen. Then he returned to Dublin, where a branch of the new society was also formed.

Tone himself was already convinced "that the influence of England was the radical vice in Irish government, and that Ireland would never be free, prosperous or happy until she was independent, and that independence was unattainable while the connexion with England lasted." The Whig Club he regarded with contempt; the Protestants he despaired of; his hope was in the Dissenters and the Catholics.<sup>2</sup> In founding the United Irish Society he stated with clearness what were his objects and what the means to be employed. "To subvert the tyranny of an execrable Government, to break the connection with England—these were my objects. To unite the whole people of Ireland, to abolish the memory of past dissensions, and to substitute the common name of Irishman in place of the denominations of Protestant and Catholic and Dissenter—these were my means."<sup>3</sup> Neilson and Russell, and perhaps a few others, shared his views about separation, but

<sup>1</sup> Lecky, iii. 10-13.

<sup>2</sup> Tone's *Autobiography*, i. 26.

<sup>3</sup> Tone, i. 50-51.



the Society as a body did not go so far. They declared in the first of three resolutions that the weight of English influence in Irish government was so great that nothing but a cordial union among all the people of Ireland could act as an effective counterpoise ; by the second resolution, that a radical reform was required ; and by the third, that no reform would be practicable which did not include Irishmen of every religious persuasion. There is here no demand for separation. Indeed, the great Convention at Dungannon, in 1793, emphatically expressed its attachment to the British connexion and its antipathy to a republican form of government ;<sup>1</sup> and if Parliamentary reform and Catholic emancipation, as well as the abolition of tithes, had been granted, the United Irishmen, with few exceptions, would have been satisfied that their work was done.<sup>2</sup>

Though Catholics were free to enter the new Society, it does not appear that they did so in Belfast, where the members were usually Dissenters and of the middle class—clergymen, doctors, lawyers, bankers, merchants and manufacturers.<sup>3</sup> In Dublin the chairman of the first branch established was the Hon. Simon Butler, a barrister and brother of Lord Mountgarrett ; the secretary was Napper Tandy, a merchant. Among the members were Hamilton Rowan, a man of good family and a graduate of Cambridge ; and Dr. Drennan, the Tyrtaeus of the Society, a poet whose verses were full of feeling and fire. Keogh and many of the Catholics also joined.<sup>4</sup> Outside of Dublin, however, the Catholics held aloof, and Neilson, in the end of 1792, complained that more of them had not joined in the south and west.<sup>5</sup> Nor did many of the Dissenters join outside Belfast, and the Defenders and Peep-of-Day Boys continued their quarrels in spite of the personal appeals made to both sides by Tone and Neilson and Keogh.<sup>6</sup> Yet religious animosities were being softened down. Neilson and his friends had established the *Northern*

<sup>1</sup> Madden, iv. 4-8, 18.

<sup>2</sup> *Pieces of Irish History*, pp. 12-15.

<sup>3</sup> Madden, iv. 4-8.

<sup>4</sup> Tone, i. 54-58 ; Lecky, iii. 13-15, 23, 26.

<sup>5</sup> Madden, iv. 96-97.

<sup>6</sup> Tone, i. 104-106.

*Star* at Belfast for the express purpose of furthering the interests of the Society, and it constantly preached unity and peace, and not always without success.<sup>1</sup> The Protestant Tone became the paid secretary of the Catholic Committee; the Catholic delegates on their way to London were fêted and cheered by the Dissenters at Belfast; and in 1792, for the first time, the Dublin Volunteers, fearful of offending their Catholic brethren, refused to parade as usual round the statue of King William.<sup>2</sup> These were infallible signs that the people were becoming united; and now this united people demanded a drastic Reform Bill, the chief features of which were single-member constituencies, manhood suffrage, abolition of the property qualification for Parliament, payment of members, and annual Parliaments. The Government became alarmed; but its alarm increased when it was ascertained that arming and drilling was going on at Belfast, and that the Defenders were becoming a political body, demanding relief from taxes and rents and tithes.<sup>3</sup>

At no time had Grattan any sympathy with advanced measures of reform, and his hatred of the French Revolution was little less than that of Burke. He was against universal suffrage, against the continued existence of the Volunteers, against the United Irish Society, and in favour of the war with France, which the United Irishmen vehemently denounced.<sup>4</sup> What he wanted was moderate Parliamentary reform, the concession of full civil rights to the Catholics, a limitation of pensions and places, a Parliament representing the people, and an executive responsible to Parliament; and for these measures he pleaded, year after year, with extraordinary eloquence. But he was a voice crying in the wilderness. The Government, supported by a corrupt majority, would have repression rather than reform, and accordingly a proclamation was issued in 1793 against unlawful assemblies. Directly, it struck at newly-formed associations, but it was

<sup>1</sup> Tone, i. 71.

<sup>2</sup> Lecky, iii. 105.

<sup>3</sup> Plowden, ii. 397; Lecky, iii. 196-7.

<sup>4</sup> Plowden, ii. 458-60; Lecky, iii. 93.



as much intended against the Volunteers, as was also the Convention Act prohibiting public meetings of any kind for the redress of grievances; and the Gunpowder Act, which prohibited the importation of arms and gunpowder without a licence.<sup>1</sup> The army was augmented to 20,000 men; an Act was also passed for the embodying of 16,000 militia; and the compulsory enlistment for the latter roused the bitterest feelings among the people.<sup>2</sup> About the same time four troops of dragoons entered Belfast, pulled down patriotic emblems, and attacked all who were in the streets, wounding many and terrorizing all. They were restrained from further acts of violence by the presence of 700 Volunteers, who assembled to protect the lives and properties of the citizens—conduct which was so resented by Government, that every assembly of Volunteers was henceforth declared to be unlawful and was to be dispersed by force.<sup>3</sup> Napper Tandy, for having adversely criticized a speech of the Solicitor-General's in Parliament, was declared guilty of a breach of privilege.<sup>4</sup> He fled to America, however, as it was known that he had taken the Defender oath, and this was a treasonable offence. The same year Butler and Bond were fined and imprisoned for declaring that a Committee of the House of Lords had acted illegally. The next year a meeting of the United Irish Society was broken up and had their papers seized; and Hamilton Rowan was prosecuted for seditious libel because he had, two years before, distributed an address of the United Irishmen to the Volunteers. In spite of Curran's speech in his defence—one of the finest ever delivered at the Bar—he was convicted and fined £500, as well as sentenced to two years' imprisonment. He managed, however, to escape from prison and reached France, though a reward of £1000 was offered for his recapture.<sup>5</sup>

Nor did Fitzgibbon and his friends favour any concessions to the Catholics. They consented to the Act of 1793 only

<sup>1</sup> Plowden, ii. 427-9.

<sup>2</sup> Lecky, iii. 216-17.

<sup>3</sup> *Pieces of Irish History*, pp. 55-59.

<sup>4</sup> Tone, i. 54.

<sup>5</sup> Madden, i. 248-50, 260, 262, ii. 184-98.

under pressure from Pitt and Dundas ; but at the same time they struck at the Catholics by passing the Convention Act ; and they prohibited any of that creed from becoming officers in the newly-formed Militia.<sup>1</sup> They obstinately refused to allow Catholics to enter Parliament ; and it was their intrigues which led to the recall of Lord Fitzwilliam. It is probable, as Mr. Lecky thinks, that they hoped the concessions to the Catholics would breed dissensions between them and the Dissenters ; and as the enfranchisement of so many forty-shilling freeholders would throw the representation of the counties into Catholic hands, the Presbyterians on their side would wish for the continuance of the rotten boroughs as the most effective counterpoise to Catholic predominance. These hopes were not realized, for Catholic and Dissenter remained united, and continued to work together for reform. But with the recall of Fitzwilliam and the coming over of Lord Camden (1795) as Viceroy, all hope of reform was over, and all thinking men who loved Ireland looked to the future with dread.

In the preceding year the Catholic Bishops had sent a memorial to the Viceroy asking for the necessary licence to establish seminaries for the education of priests, the colleges on the Continent being no longer available owing to the progress of the French Revolution. Not a few of the Bishops, as well as Dr. Troy, were outspoken in their loyalty,<sup>2</sup> and the Government regarded the proposal with a favourable eye. By some, and these not unfavourable to the Catholics, it was suggested that Trinity College should give the necessary facilities ; but to this the Bishops objected that a public university was unsuited for the education of priests, who should be trained to habits of austere discipline, and were to be ministers of a "very ritual religion." Grattan, acting as the mouthpiece of some Catholics, would prefer to have Catholics and Protestants educated together ;<sup>3</sup> but this was considered impracticable in the case of priests. Edmond Burke, who had been consulted, held an opposite opinion to that of Grattan.

<sup>1</sup> Plowden, ii. 435.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 443-5.

<sup>3</sup> *Parliamentary Debates*, xv. 201-203.



To educate priests at Trinity College, he thought, would be absurd ; and he warned the Bishops also not to have clerical education under Government control, and above all not under the control of such men as Fitzgibbon. In London the interests of the Bishops were looked after by the chaplain at the Spanish Embassy, Dr. Hussey, an Irish priest of great ability, the friend of Dr. Johnson, the very special friend of Burke ; and it was in letters to Hussey that Burke gave expression to his views. Dr. Hussey was able also to obtain the support of the Duke of Portland ; and when Fitzwilliam was coming to Ireland he was instructed to have provision made for the education of the Catholic parochial clergy. His early and unexpected recall prevented him from giving legislative effect to these instructions, but the Bill for founding a Catholic College was drafted when he left Ireland. It was introduced under Lord Camden and soon passed into law.<sup>1</sup> In its final shape the measure provided for separate Catholic teaching, and for supervision by a Board of Trustees, among whom were Fitzgibbon and three other Protestants. All the others, seventeen in number, were Catholics, and of these ten were Bishops. A sum of £8000 was voted for building and initial equipment, and a site was obtained from the Duke of Leinster at Maynooth, a most unfortunate selection when more healthy sites could have been obtained. Buildings were then erected, Dr. Hussey became President, professors were appointed, students went into residence, and a college which has become one of the greatest Catholic colleges in the world was started on its way.<sup>2</sup>

It was part of Camden's instructions to make some provision for the Catholic parochial clergy, and to put the lower order of Catholics on a level with those of other persuasions in the matter of primary education. But he was either unable or unwilling to attend to these questions, and in his time nothing was done. To Catholic Emancipation he was instructed to

<sup>1</sup> *Parliamentary Debates*, xv. 404.

<sup>2</sup> Plowden, ii. 447-8 ; Healy's *History of Maynooth College*, pp. 99-127, 163-4.

give every opposition, and he was also to stir up an anti-Catholic feeling, and to organize an Irish party of resistance.<sup>1</sup> That he had no difficulty in doing this in Parliament was soon manifested in the debates on Grattan's Catholic Relief Bill. Bigotry, self-interest and corruption were all on one side; on the other were patriotism and statesmanship; and the speeches of Grattan and Parsons, of Knox and Arthur O'Connor, were marked by great eloquence and power. These gentlemen could point to the fact that the Catholics from every city and county in Ireland had petitioned for the measure; that the Protestants had not petitioned against it; and Grattan was able to say with truth that, except from the corporation of Dublin, not a single protest had come from city or county, from grand jury or corporation. In solemn tones Parsons warned the House of the danger of first exciting hopes and then, violently and without reason, dashing these hopes to the ground; and Knox told the Government that the choice was, either to pass the Bill or to re-enact the penal laws and risk a rebellion.<sup>2</sup> In 1794 Pitt and Dundas declared that they were not going to risk a rebellion on so small a question, but in 1795 they had changed their minds.<sup>3</sup> The servile majority in Parliament who were ready to support Fitzwilliam were now ready to follow Camden in the opposite direction, and the Bill was thrown out by 155 votes to 84.<sup>4</sup> When Fitzwilliam left Ireland he was mourned as a friend, but when Camden came he was hailed as an enemy. The day of his arrival he was hissed through the streets, the military had to be called out as riots were feared, the houses of Fitzgibbon and the Speaker were attacked, and the former as he passed through the streets was struck with a stone.<sup>5</sup> Popular feeling became still more embittered when Fitzgibbon was advanced in the peerage, with the title of Earl of Clare; and when the Catholic Relief Bill was rejected, the Catholics turned away with disgust from the doors of Parliament. To that assembly it was useless to

<sup>1</sup> Lecky, iii. 328.

<sup>2</sup> *Parliamentary Debates*, xv. 28-57, 255-6, 338.

<sup>3</sup> Plowden, ii. 471.

<sup>4</sup> *Debates*, xv. 361.

<sup>5</sup> Plowden, ii. 531-2.



make further appeal. Many of them at once joined the United Irishmen, disaffection rapidly spread, and in secret societies and in violence that redress was sought which constitutional effort alone should have obtained.

The Defenders became especially active. From Armagh they had now extended to the other counties of Ulster to Meath, Westmeath and Kildare in Leinster ; and in Connaught they were numerous and aggressive. Like the Whiteboys they aimed at lowering rents and tithes and raising the wages of labourers, and they sought to effect their objects by secret organization and crime. They compelled servants to quit the service of masters who were obnoxious, intimidated magistrates, witnesses and jurors, endeavoured to seduce the Militia from their allegiance, houghed cattle, burned houses, made midnight raids for arms, compelled smiths to make pikes and spears. In one case they openly attacked a party of soldiers, but were driven off with the loss of fifty of their number.<sup>1</sup> Placed in command of the military in Connaught, Lord Carhampton undertook to put down outrages, and under his directions 1000 persons were taken up and sent to the fleet. They had not been convicted of any crime. Some of them were in prison awaiting trial, some had neither been imprisoned nor accused. Loudly asserting their innocence, they begged hard for a trial, but they begged in vain. On mere suspicion of being Defenders they were torn from their families, and amid protestations and entreaties and the wailing of women they were forcibly sent on board ship. By these illegal measures Carhampton struck terror, but he also generated discontent and bitterness which long endured.<sup>2</sup>

In Armagh the Defenders and Peep-of-Day Boys continued quarrelling, and in September 1795 they fought a pitched battle at a place called The Diamond, in which the Defenders were beaten with heavy loss. The victors then formed themselves into a new association called the Orange Society, which rapidly spread throughout Ulster, absorbing all that was

<sup>1</sup> *Parliamentary Debates*, xvi. 43, 49, 102-9.

<sup>2</sup> Lecky, ii. 419-20.

intolerant and even fanatic among the Protestant and Presbyterian inhabitants. The memory of William of Orange they regarded with special reverence. On the other hand, they regarded all Catholics with special abhorrence, and seem to have taken an oath to exterminate those in their midst.<sup>1</sup> They compelled masters to dismiss Catholic servants, landlords to evict Catholic tenants, burned the houses of Catholics, destroyed their property, in many cases sacrificed their lives. They posted up notices warning the Catholics to leave the province by a certain date—to go to Hell or Connaught. In this way the Armagh weaver was driven from his loom and the farmer from his land, and to such an extent that from that one county more than 700 families were sent adrift. Some went to Connaught, all were houseless and homeless, nor had they been guilty of any crime except to have professed the Catholic faith. Grattan in Parliament denounced these Orange outrages and the magistrates who stood idly by while inoffensive Catholics were being robbed and driven from their homes, and sometimes murdered by lawless bands. But the Castle party would do nothing. In the Orangemen they recognized the anti-Catholic faction which Camden had been directed to encourage, and such a faction they would not restrain, still less would they compensate the Catholics who had been despoiled. On the other hand, an Act of Indemnity was passed in the session of 1796, which indemnified Carhampton and the magistrates who had acted under him for their illegal acts against the Catholic peasants of Connaught. In the same session an Insurrection Act was passed, giving magistrates power to declare any district disturbed, and as such placing it under martial law. Magistrates might also search for arms at any hour, day or night; they might send before the judge of assize any one found out after dark, and the judge might send him to the fleet; and the magistrates might also search houses at night and send those who were absent from home without cause to the fleet.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Plowden, ii. 536-7.

<sup>2</sup> *Parliamentary Debates*, xvi. 103-7.



One effect of these measures was that the United Irishmen rapidly increased in numbers. Many of the Catholics joined after the recall of Fitzwilliam, many in consequence of the severities of Carhampton, many more after the passage of the Insurrection and Indemnity Acts, but most of all because of the Orange outrages; and it was noted that in Catholic counties, whenever an Orange lodge was set up, the Catholics hastened to join the United Irishmen. From Parliament they had nothing to expect but repressive laws, from the Orangemen nothing but robbery and murder, and hence they sought the protection of a powerful organization. By the end of 1796, if the Peep-of-Day Boys had been turned into Orangemen, the Defenders had become United Irishmen, and to such an extent that long before the Rebellion broke out the United Irish Society had 500,000 men enrolled.<sup>1</sup> Its meetings having been broken up in 1794, it was organized early in the following year as a secret society, its declared object being "a full representation of all the people of Ireland." This was an elastic phrase which did not exclude Parliamentary action, but which was soon understood by the vast majority of members to contemplate a revolution and a republic. The civil organization of the society was made up of a number of committees, the baronial committees being composed of delegates from the various societies, the county committees of delegates from the baronial committees, the provincial committees of delegates from the county committees, and the national committee of delegates from the provincial bodies. The military organization was on similar lines. The secretary of each society of twelve members was appointed a non-commissioned officer; the members of baronial committees, each delegated from five societies, was a captain; the delegates from baronial committees to the county committees were colonels; all officers above that rank were appointed by the National Directory. Both the civil and military organizations were perfected by the end of 1796, and by that time Arthur O'Connor, Macnevin and Addis Emmet had joined the society and held prominent

<sup>1</sup> *Pieces of Irish History*, pp. 178, 181.

positions, as did also the son of the Duke of Leinster, Lord Edward FitzGerald.<sup>1</sup>

Tone had left Ireland in the previous year. The French Government had sent, in 1794, an agent to England and Ireland, to ascertain if a party could be found in either or both countries to favour a French invasion. This agent was a Protestant clergyman, the Rev. William Jackson, an Englishman of Irish descent who had lived for some years in Paris, where he had imbibed revolutionary principles and formed friendly relations with the revolutionary authorities. Arrived in London, he foolishly confided in an old friend of his, a solicitor named Cockayne, who at once gave secret information to Mr. Pitt. The latter bade Cockayne accompany Jackson to Ireland, to watch his movements and obtain incriminating evidence against him. These orders were faithfully carried out. Jackson was arrested and charged with high treason, and on the evidence of Cockayne, who turned informer, he was found guilty and sentenced to death in April 1795. He managed, however, to get some poison and took it, and while awaiting sentence in the dock he fell dead.<sup>2</sup> Tone had met with Jackson and Cockayne, and had been asked by Jackson to go on a mission to France from the United Irishmen. He was, however, wary and suspicious, and refused, though he drew up a paper describing the various parties in Ireland, and dwelt on the likelihood of a French invading force getting support. In all this there was not sufficient material to send him like Jackson to the dock and to the scaffold. But he had been treading on dangerous ground, and having become a marked man he resolved, if he could do so, to leave the country. Through the influence of powerful friends, he was allowed by the Government to leave for America, and leaving Ireland in June, arrived at Philadelphia in August.

Before leaving Dublin his friends Addis Emmet and Russell urged him to seek for French aid for Ireland ; and at Belfast,

<sup>1</sup> *Parliamentary Debates*, xvii. 519-20 ; Lecky, iii. 486-7 ; Moore's *Life of Lord Edward FitzGerald* ; *Report of Secret Committee of House of Commons*.

<sup>2</sup> Tone, i. 203-9.



on the Cave Hill outside the city, he and Russell, with Neilson and MacCracken, all prominent United Irishmen, swore never to desist in their efforts until they had subverted English authority in Ireland.<sup>1</sup> Hamilton Rowan and Napper Tandy, whom he met in America, fully shared these views; and Tone, with letters of introduction from the French consul at Philadelphia, set sail from Sandy Hook on the 1st of January 1796, and reached Paris in February. In the French capital he had many interviews with the Foreign Minister De la Croix, with Carnot, and with General Hoche, and greatly impressed them with his ability and sincerity. Ultimately he was assured that an expedition would be sent to Ireland; preparations were at once made; and finally, after delays which to Tone seemed interminable, the expedition was ready to set sail from Brest on the 15th of December. Hoche was general-in-chief, Grouchy second in command, Hardy and Humbert were among the generals. Tone himself was *chef de brigade*. The whole force, borne in 43 vessels, was 15,000; arms, ammunition, heavy guns were in abundance; the soldiers had seen service and might be relied on; and as for Hoche, his talents were scarcely inferior to those of Bonaparte. If such a force under such a commander could have landed in Ireland it would have spelled ruin for British domination.

Though an English squadron was outside the harbour, engaged in the work of observation, the expedition never encountered an English vessel.<sup>2</sup> In this it was fortunate, but in every other respect it had ill-luck. In passing out to sea through the narrow channel called the Raz, one vessel struck a rock and went down with all hands. A dense fog was succeeded by a dead calm, during which the sails flapped lazily and no progress was made. In the fog the Admiral's vessel with Hoche on board became separated from her consorts and never reached Ireland, but returned to France. The same fate befell a few of the other vessels. Most of the scattered vessels, however, got into touch with the main body, and by the 20th thirty-five out of forty-three were at Bantry Bay. If

<sup>1</sup> Tone, ii. 212-14.

<sup>2</sup> *Parliamentary Debates*, xvii. 264.

Tone had had his way he would have at once landed, and the weather was then calm. But the Admiral's vessel with Hoche was looked for, and meantime the wind rose. For the next few days it was a violent storm, blowing directly from the shore. Twenty of the vessels were then outside the harbour, fifteen had got inside, but even these latter could not attempt a landing in the teeth of such a gale; and the former, unable to maintain their position, were compelled to put to sea. The vessels remaining had 6500 men on board, including Grouchy, and that General, to the great joy of Tone, determined to land. But the fury of the gale increased; the ships dragged their anchors and were tossed about like cockle-shells; no communication was possible between them, for no small boat could live in such a sea, and no spoken word could be heard above the howling of the tempest. Admiral Bouvet refused to obey Grouchy, saying that a landing was impossible, and to the rage of Tone the vessels cut their cables and stood out to sea. In twos and threes they made their way to France. By the 4th of January the last of them had disappeared from the Irish coasts, and by the 11th Grouchy's vessel entered the harbour of Rochelle. Once again the winds had taken sides with England, and had helped her as effectually as when they scattered the ships of the Armada.<sup>1</sup>

But France would be sure to make a further effort. She had become a great power. The whole left bank of the Rhine from Basle to the sea was hers; Belgium, Nice and Savoy were in her hands; Spain and Holland were her allies; Italy had been overrun by her armies; the Pope was humbled; Prussia had ceased to be her enemy; Austria trembled and was willing to make peace with her. England alone remained and so far had proved to be invincible on the sea. But the strain was terrible. The ports of Europe were closed against her ships, her debt was going up by millions, her public

<sup>1</sup> Tone, ii. 153-78; Lecky, iii. 527-39; Guillon, *La France et l'Irlande pendant la Révolution*, pp. 223-5, 251-4. Grouchy has been often blamed for failing to land, but it is Bouvet and not he that deserves blame.



securities falling, the Bank of England obliged to suspend payment. She too was anxious for peace ; but evidently she had asked too much of France in asking her to give up Belgium, and in consequence negotiations were speedily ended, and Lord Malmesbury, her ambassador, was ordered to quit France within forty-eight hours. The war, then, was to continue, and any moment a new French expedition might be sent to Ireland. Was it wise to keep Ireland divided and disturbed ? In Ulster the Orangemen continued their exasperating tactics ; and some yeomanry regiments lately raised were but Orangemen with arms in their hands, in receipt of Government pay. They were often as violent and as lawless as the Orangemen, and as little under control. The United Irish Society, on the other hand, had spread throughout the province, meeting violence with violence, and over large areas robberies and murders and midnight raids were common.<sup>1</sup> The state of Munster was very different. Sir Laurence Parsons narrated in Parliament how he had seen the Catholic peasants give every aid to the military when they were marching towards Bantry to encounter Hoche's troops. They had cleaned the roads for them, given them horses and carts for transport purposes, shared their provisions with the soldiers, and prayed for their success.<sup>2</sup> Tone complained that the Irish priests hated the very name of the French Revolution,<sup>3</sup> and evidently their influence was strong in Munster. To confirm all such as these in their loyalty and to win back the disloyal in Ulster, Grattan thought was still possible, by the concession of Catholic Emancipation and even a moderate Parliamentary reform. These views were thought to have found favour in high quarters, and a report was current that Camden was to be recalled and that the Prince of Wales himself was to come over as a messenger of peace ; and had this been true how much evil would have been avoided and how much good done !<sup>4</sup>

But it was not to be. Camden, who was firmly opposed

<sup>1</sup> *Parliamentary Debates*, xvii. 148-9, 164.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 275.

<sup>3</sup> Tone, i. 300.

<sup>4</sup> Plowden, ii. 589-90 ; Lecky, iv. 146-7.

to all concession, was retained in office. So also was Fitzgibbon, a far stronger and far abler man, and *he* had declared his determination to make the Irish "as tame as cats."<sup>1</sup> The greedy, the selfish, the intolerant, the pensioner and placeman and political jobber, the brutal magistrate, the insolent officer, the lawless yeoman, the spy, the informer, the perjured witness, the unscrupulous advocate, the partisan judge—all these were ready to support him; and to all the demands made by the people nothing was offered but the naked sword. Under the Insurrection Act large districts were proclaimed; the Habeas Corpus Act was suspended; the militia were increased; two United Irish committees were arrested in Belfast and their papers seized; and in March General Lake was sent to Belfast to disarm Ulster.<sup>2</sup> He issued a proclamation calling on the inhabitants to give up to the military officers any arms they might have, and also to give information about any arms they knew to be concealed. In a short time nearly 6000 guns and bayonets were given up,<sup>3</sup> but there must have been great numbers not given up, and probably concealed, and Lake proceeded to search for them. He had been ordered by the Chief Secretary, Pelham, not to allow any of the search-parties out unaccompanied by an officer. This perhaps was not possible over so large an area, and the result was that the outrages perpetrated by the secret societies throughout Ulster were soon eclipsed in barbarity by the savageries of the King's troops. Party spirit, religious animosity, local antipathies urged on the Orange yeomanry; but even worse than these was a Welsh regiment called the Ancient Britons, whose progress was everywhere marked by robbery and murder. Houses were searched, other houses were burned, property was wantonly destroyed; to extort confessions men were half hanged, then taken down and half hanged again; men were picketed until they fainted, then picketed again; men were killed and maimed; women and children were set upon and done to death. A little boy opened for two

<sup>1</sup> *Parliamentary Debates*, xvii. 16.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 297-8, 478-82.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 129-30; Lecky, iv. 29.



soldiers the gate leading to a gentleman's yard, and for his civility they shot him dead and hacked his body to pieces. An old man of seventy, who fled in terror from a party of soldiers, was pursued by them, and while on his knees piteously begging for mercy had his head cut off by a single blow.<sup>1</sup> Another old man named Dixon, mending his cart outside his door, was charged by a certain Captain Fraser with being abroad after sunset and so violating the Insurrection Act. Having been arrested, Dixon tried to escape, when Fraser despatched him with repeated strokes of his sword. The murderer was arraigned at the next assizes, several witnesses testifying to the inoffensive character of the murdered man. But the judge commanded the jury to acquit Fraser, saying he was a gallant officer, and that if Dixon was so good a man as had been represented it was well for him to be out of this wicked world.<sup>2</sup> About the same time Arthur O'Connor was imprisoned for seditious libel;<sup>3</sup> and a few months later a Northern Presbyterian, William Orr, was convicted and hanged for administering a seditious oath, though the jury swore that some of themselves had been in a state of intoxication at the time of giving their verdict.<sup>4</sup> The *Northern Star* newspaper, meantime, was suppressed and its press broken and burned, and in May the whole country was placed under martial law.<sup>5</sup>

It was admitted in Parliament, even by the Government supporters, that Lake's proclamation in Ulster was illegal; still more illegal was his use of torture to extort confession. But these illegalities were defended and condoned. The outrages of the soldiers were either denied or minimized, while those done by the United Irishmen were magnified; and instead of Grattan's party increasing, it was becoming less. In opposing the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act he was defeated by 137 to 7 votes; his Emancipation Bill was thrown out by 143 to 19; his motion to repeal the Insurrection Act by 127 to

<sup>1</sup> Lecky, iv. 11-12, 42-44, 93; Plowden, ii. 627, 646-7.

<sup>2</sup> Cloncurry's *Personal Recollections*, 50-51.

<sup>3</sup> Lecky, iv. 78.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* 106-7.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* 85.

15.<sup>1</sup> Something of the heat and passion so plentiful outside found its way into the calmer atmosphere of Parliamentary debate. Grattan and his supporters were sneered at as the seven wise men; and because Ponsonby advised that concessions should be made, that Catholic Emancipation and Parliamentary Reform should be granted, he was assailed by the Solicitor-General, Toler, as a man who had disgraced the character of an Irish gentleman; and Toler avowed that if he had heard outside the walls of Parliament any one use such language as Ponsonby had used, "he would have seized the ruffian by the throat and dragged him to the dust."<sup>2</sup> Toler was little respected even by his own side. Insolent in Parliament, he was known to be a bully at the Bar, and at a later date was both a bully and a buffoon on the Bench; but he said what others felt and had not the courage to say, and his language was in keeping with the spirit of insolence and rancour which now animated the majority in Parliament. In such an assembly Grattan felt that he could do no good, and in May 1797 he and Curran and Ponsonby, and the few who acted with them, ceased to attend Parliament. "We have offered you our measures (Parliamentary Reform, etc.)," he said to the Government, "you will reject them; we deprecate yours; you will persevere; having no hope left to persuade or dissuade, and having discharged our duty, we shall trouble you no more."<sup>3</sup> At the general election, which took place a few months later, he refused to stand for Dublin; but he took care to state his views on public affairs, describing the Government as blooding the magistracy with the poor man's liberty, and with employing the rich like bloodhounds to hunt down the poor.<sup>4</sup>

All this time the United Irishmen were looking for foreign aid. The negotiations were carried on through M. Rheinhardt, the French Consul at Hamburg, the Irish agent being Mr. Lewins, a Dublin solicitor, specially deputed by the National Directory.<sup>5</sup> In July 1797 Dr. Macnevin was also despatched

<sup>1</sup> *Parliamentary Debates*, xvii. 16, 126, 207.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 332.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 570.

<sup>4</sup> Lecky, iv. 1, 89-90.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* 142-4.



to Hamburg to emphasize the demands of Lewins and to give fuller information, which he did in a Memorial of great ability.<sup>1</sup> Lewins and Macnevin were to get a loan from Hamburg, and to get aid in men and arms from France and Spain, and also from Holland, which was France's ally, and which, having deposed its stadtholder, was now the Batavian Republic. In deference to the wishes of the latter power, which was anxious to have the glory of establishing an Irish Republic, it was agreed that a Dutch expedition should first put to sea ; and by the 1st of July a strong naval force under Admiral De Winter, with 14,000 men on board, was at the Texel.<sup>2</sup> A French expedition was to be sent from Brest to act in concert with the Dutch. This looked bad for England. Worse still, the Channel Fleet mutinied at Spithead in April, and in the following month a mutiny broke out at the mouth of the Medway, which lasted for six weeks, and in which twenty-five vessels joined, some of them belonging to Admiral Duncan's force set to watch the Dutch at the Texel. In addition, fresh negotiations entered into with France ended in nothing, for once again Lord Malmesbury was ordered to leave France. Yet did England emerge safely from all these dangers. In February Admiral Jervis destroyed the Spanish fleet off Cape St. Vincent.<sup>3</sup> The mutinies at Spithead and at the Medway were quelled, and in October the Dutch were defeated. Fortune had certainly favoured England. Had either the Dutch or French been ready to put to sea in May or June, while the mutiny lasted, they could have landed any force they pleased in Ireland. When the Dutch fleet was ready the winds came to England's aid, and for six weeks De Winter was unable to move.<sup>4</sup> When he sailed out in October the English were equal in strength, equal in vessels, superior in guns. An obstinate battle was fought, the Dutch showing all their old spirit on the sea. But their defeat was complete, and with the loss of 1100 men, the Admiral himself a prisoner, and eleven vessels captured, only a small and shattered remnant of De

<sup>1</sup> *Castlereagh Correspondence*, i. 270.

<sup>3</sup> Lecky, iv. 148, 169-72.

<sup>2</sup> Tone, ii. 227-43.

<sup>4</sup> Tone, ii. 243-64

Winter's fleet returned to the Texel.<sup>1</sup> In the meantime a change of government in France had driven Carnot from power and into exile, and in the same month of September General Hoche died; and with the loss of these two, both friendly to Ireland, and the evidence soon available that Bonaparte's thoughts were directed elsewhere, Tone and his friends had to abandon all hope of immediate French aid.<sup>2</sup>

For years the United Irishmen had been organizing. Was all this to be for nothing? Were they to submit until Fitzgibbon had them as tame as cats? or were they to strike back even if no foreign aid came? These questions were soon answered in Ulster. A proclamation was issued in May granting pardon, with certain specified exceptions, to all United Irishmen who would before the 24th of June make their submission, giving at the same time security for their future good behaviour.<sup>3</sup> Had French aid come the submissions would probably have been few. But these Ulstermen felt that without foreign aid they must fail. They were a cautious race, unwilling to take risks; the religious animosities in their midst had reawakened their old antipathy to the Catholics; and for these reasons they made their submission in thousands. The province again began to be loyal; outrages ceased; the summer assizes were held as usual; and the civil law was found sufficient to preserve order.<sup>4</sup>

Antrim and Down refused to desert the United Irish Society. Though strong in parts of Leinster, it had so far made little progress in Munster or Connaught. But it soon spread into Munster, and in its wake outrages followed, arms were seized, houses burned, corn and cattle destroyed.<sup>5</sup> For Catholic Emancipation and Parliamentary Reform the masses cared little, but they cared much about rent, taxes and tithes;<sup>6</sup> and now agents of the United Irish Society went among them promising that rents, taxes and tithes would be less if only the

<sup>1</sup> Lecky, iv. 179-80.

<sup>2</sup> Tone, ii. 270.

<sup>3</sup> Seward's *Collectanea Hibernica* (copy of Proclamation).

<sup>4</sup> Plowden, ii. 627, 642-3.

<sup>5</sup> Lecky, iv. 127-31, 137-41, 177.

<sup>6</sup> *Pieces of Irish History*, p. 199.



United Irishmen succeeded. These agents also reported that the Orangemen were coming south to murder the Catholics; and thus, stimulated by false hopes and frightened by groundless fears, thousands of the Catholic peasants rushed into the ranks of the United Irishmen.

On their side the Government would do nothing. Portland pleaded with Camden for Catholic concessions, but he pleaded in vain.<sup>1</sup> So late as the summer of 1797 these Catholics were relying on petitions to obtain redress, but even their meetings to petition had been proclaimed.<sup>2</sup> At that date the cause of Irish disaffection was ascribed by Grattan to the conduct of the servants of Government who were endeavouring to establish absolute power by unlimited bribery, to set up a system of corruption sustained by coercion, "a ruthless and horrid tyranny imposed on the senate by influence and on the people by arms."<sup>3</sup> The moderate men on both sides withdrew from public life, leaving the field to reactionaries on one side and to revolutionists on the other. The Government seemed as anxious for war as the United Irishmen,<sup>4</sup> and in the last days of 1797 every one who could read the signs of the times knew well that the struggle was near.

<sup>1</sup> Lecky, iv. 242-3.

<sup>2</sup> Plowden, ii. 635.

<sup>3</sup> Lecky, iv. 190.

<sup>4</sup> Miss Taylor's *Lord Edward FitzGerald*, pp. 221-2, 257.

## CHAPTER III

### *The Rebellion of 1798*

GENERAL COCKBURN, an English officer who served in Ireland during the troubled time of 1798, drew up a list of 49 persons by whom the Irish Government was carried on. This list he called "The Step-ladder ; or a View of the Irish Government during the System of Terror."<sup>1</sup> At the topmost rung of the ladder were the Irish Cabinet, consisting of Lords Clare and Castlereagh, the Speaker, the Archbishop of Cashel and Mr. John Beresford. Under these were the understrappers, among them being Mr. Cooke, the Under Secretary, and Lord Carhampton. Lower down were five "supporters of Orangeism, jobbery and corruption," and next were six "servants of the faction," immediately under whom were seven "enemies of liberty." After these came ten "ruffian magistrates, always ready to murder and burn." Lower still were a few "miscreants," such as Sirr, Swan, Sandyes, Gifford, Higgins and Hepenstall. After them came the informers. As we ascend from the latter to the "enemies of liberty," Lords Downshire and Dillon, and Messrs. Trench and Alexander call for no special notice and have not acquired eminence even in infamy. The Archbishop of Tuam was a Beresford, and brother-in-law of the Lord Chancellor. O'Beirne had been educated for the Catholic priesthood, but became a Protestant and a bishop ; and Dr. Duigenan, like O'Beirne, was a convert from Catholicity, a coarse bigot whose chief aversion was the religion he had abandoned. Lords Londonderry, Annesley and Kingsborough among the "servants of the faction" were mischievous nonentities ; Lord Waterford was one of the innumerable

<sup>1</sup> Fitzpatrick's *The Sham Squire*, pp. 193-4.



Beresfords ; Lord Blaquiére had much experience in public affairs and had a talent for intrigue ; and Toler, the Solicitor-General, who subsequently became Lord Norbury, was entirely without principle or a sense of decency. Mr. Corry, one of the "strong supporters of Orangeism," had been a patriot, and was now a violent supporter of the Government. Lords Carleton and Pery might be regarded as respectable men, much superior in character to their disreputable associates. Pery especially was a man of great ability ; but the same could not be said of Lord Enniskillen, nor of the "understrappers" Lords Drogheda and Glentworth ; and as to Claudius Beresford, his title to be remembered rests on the cruelties he exercised. Lord Carhampton, the grandson of that Henry Luttrell who had betrayed King James at Limerick, was a man whose reputation was so bad that Junius once described him as having disgraced even the name of Luttrell. He had already earned distinction by his cruelties in Connaught in 1795 ; his private as well as his public character was of the vilest, and perhaps no man in all Ireland was more execrated than he.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Cooke had been originally a clerk, and then becoming Under Secretary, had been dismissed by Fitzwilliam, but after Fitzwilliam's recall had been restored to favour and to office. He had considerable talent for intrigue, was cruel, callous, insolent and treacherous, a man whose natural place was a corrupt court, and to whom honour and justice were but empty names.<sup>2</sup>

But, after all, the most guilty were the five who formed the Irish Cabinet. It was they who controlled the whole machinery of government ; who maintained a majority in Parliament by pensions, places and titles ; who condoned the crimes of the Orangemen ; who stirred up sectarian rancour ; encouraged such men as Carhampton in all their cruelties ; employed such tools as Cooke ; promoted such lawyers as Toler ; applauded all the savageries of magistrates and military officers ; and rewarded the perjurer and the informer when he swore away the lives of the innocent as well as the guilty. Agar, who was

<sup>1</sup> *Sham Squire*, pp. 46-49.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 124 *et seq.*

Archbishop of Cashel and subsequently Archbishop of Dublin, died, in 1809, as Earl of Normanton, and had his character summed up in a contemporary publication in two lines :

Adieu, thou mitred nothingness, adieu,  
Thy failings many and thy virtues few.<sup>1</sup>

Ambitious and avaricious, he entirely neglected his episcopal duties for affairs of State, and while the curates of Dublin were starving on £50 a year, he amassed so much wealth himself that he died worth £400,000.<sup>2</sup> Beresford was at the head of the Revenue Board, and so powerful from position and family influence that he was called the King of Ireland. Both the Archbishop and the King of Ireland were stubbornly opposed to all popular concession, and favoured or suggested every act of severity done by the Government ; and in complete accord with them were the Speaker, Mr. Foster, and Lord Clare. The latter seems to have hated the whole Irish people, and never spoke of the country or the people but in opprobrious terms. Unlike Archbishop Agar, however, he was not fond of money. His passion was to rule, and with him this meant to tyrannize, to insult, to browbeat, to trample on any one who opposed him. Lord Castlereagh had entered Parliament as a reformer in 1790. He had employed Neilson, the United Irishman, as his electioneering agent, was a member of the Whig Club and of a Volunteer association, and for some years in Parliament always voted for Parliamentary reform.<sup>3</sup> Gradually he shifted his ground, and by 1797 he had done such service on the Government side of the House of Commons, and shown such ability for public affairs, that he was appointed Chief Secretary in place of Mr. Pelham, then in England. At first the post was but temporary ; but Pelham never resumed office, and during 1798 it was by Castlereagh it was filled.

It has been said that in dealing with the people the Viceroy Camden was in favour of milder measures, but that he was constantly outvoted by Clare and Castlereagh.<sup>4</sup> It is true

<sup>1</sup> *Sham Squire*, p. 198.      <sup>2</sup> D'Alton's *Archbishops of Dublin*, pp. 350-51.

<sup>3</sup> *Castlereagh Correspondence*, i. 8-9.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* 157-8 ; *Sham Squire*, p. 227 ; *Sir John Moore's Diary*, i. 286.



that before going to Ireland he favoured a moderate Parliamentary reform and some other minor concessions ; but after going to Ireland he ceased to be a reformer in any sense, and would not, even under pressure from Portland, consent to have anything done for the Catholics.<sup>1</sup> It is true also that in opposition to his chief advisers in Ireland he disapproved of appointing Lake Commander-in-Chief, but his objection was to Lake's incapacity for high command, not to the severities which Lake employed.<sup>2</sup> Camden, it is certain, was a less able and a much weaker man than either Clare or Castlereagh, and was, no doubt, awed and controlled by their more commanding wills. At all events, he made no effective protest against their policy of savage repression ; he allowed himself to be dominated by them ; it was their views he put forward in his letters to Portland and Pitt ; and every barbarous act of the Irish Government in 1798 and in the previous years was done with his sanction and under the shelter of his name. As for Pitt and Portland, they regarded Irish affairs—in Grattan's words—"with lazy contumely," content to believe Camden and Castlereagh that the country was seething with sedition, and that what the masses wanted was not reform but separation from England. Hence they approved of Carhampton's illegalities and of Lake's proclamation, of Government prosecutions and of military violence, of rewarding partisan judges, unscrupulous advocates, perjured witnesses and degraded informers.

There was a plentiful supply of these latter. Joining the ranks of the Defenders or United Irishmen, they learned the secrets of these societies, and then, turning on their fellow-members, sent them to the dock and to the scaffold. Sometimes it was the desire to save themselves which led them to betray others ; sometimes they acted merely for money. In many cases they were men of broken fortune and desperate character, utterly unworthy of being believed. Curran, for instance, had no difficulty in showing at the Drogheda Assizes in 1794 that the informer against the Defenders was a perjurer.

<sup>1</sup> Lecky, iv. 27-28, 67-68, 230.

<sup>2</sup> *Secret Service under Pitt*, p. 358.

The witness against Dr. Drennan he described truly as an abandoned profligate. Captain Armstrong, who swore away the lives of the brothers Sheares, was an infidel, an acknowledged disciple of Tom Paine; and Reynolds, who betrayed Bond, was shown to have no regard for the sanctity of an oath.<sup>1</sup> A more repulsive type of informer was O'Brien, who was subsequently hanged for murder, and whom Curran described as dipping the Evangelists in blood. He and others, known at the time as the "battalion of testimony," were kept at Dublin Castle, and under the tutelage of Sirr learned to swear away the lives of the innocent as well as the guilty. They came into court "from the very chambers of the Castle, where the wretch that is buried a man lies till his heart has time to fester and dissolve and is then dug up an informer."<sup>2</sup>

A more numerous class of informers were those who never appeared in court, and who before the public were honest and patriotic, but in secret were Government spies in receipt of Government pay. Duggan from Tyrone took part in the rebellions of 1798 and 1803, and yet in one year drew £500 as a Government spy. Maguckian was the legal adviser of the United Irishmen and systematically betrayed his clients.<sup>3</sup> Macnally, the patriot barrister and close friend of Curran, was for thirty years before his death in receipt of a pension, and only with difficulty was his treachery discovered after his death.<sup>4</sup> Magan, who betrayed Lord Edward Fitzgerald, was a Catholic barrister and a United Irishman.<sup>5</sup> Mr. Turner, LL.D., was on the executive of the United Irish Society, the trusted friend of Lord Edward and his wife, imprisoned with Emmet and others in 1798, and even attainted, and all the time was telling what he knew and receiving payment for it.<sup>6</sup> Dillon, a solicitor at Dundalk, ruined his friend Dickie, another solicitor.<sup>7</sup> Dr.

<sup>1</sup> *Curran's Speeches*, pp. 194-5, 332-4.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 297, 309-12.

<sup>3</sup> *Sham Squire*, pp. 272-9, 340-1.

<sup>4</sup> *Secret Service under Pitt*, pp. 174-210; *Curran's Life*, by his Son, ii. 14.

<sup>5</sup> *Secret Service*, pp. 126-53.

<sup>6</sup> Moore's *Lord Edward Fitzgerald*, pp. 410-23.

<sup>7</sup> *Sham Squire*, pp. 339-40.



Conlon, of the same town, endeavoured to ruin his colleague, Dr. Dromgoole. Robert O'Connor gave information against his brother Arthur; and it is not unlikely that Sir Jonah Barrington also betrayed his friends.<sup>1</sup> Stranger still and more shameful, among those in receipt of secret service money was Father Doran of Monasterevin, who got £50; and that amount was also given on several occasions to Father Barry, P.P., of Mallow.<sup>2</sup> There are many names on the list difficult, if not impossible, to identify, and as to the amounts, they varied from very small sums to £5000, this being the amount given to Reynolds.<sup>3</sup> Money was not spared, and for the four years ending September 1801 more than £38,000 was thus expended by the Irish Government; and this is exclusive of pensions and places given as the reward of treachery.<sup>4</sup>

Much valuable information thus came into the hands of the Government, and hence they were able to arrest the Ulster leaders in 1796, just as Hoche and Tone were preparing to leave Brest.<sup>5</sup> Newell, a miniature painter of Belfast, gave much information about the Ulster United Irishmen in the summer of 1797;<sup>6</sup> Macnally was in a position to know much and did not fail to tell all he knew. Francis Higgins, nicknamed the Sham Squire, one of the lowest characters of the time, though not a United Irishman, had, as owner of the *Freeman's Journal*, many opportunities of getting information, and was not only a paid informer himself but even paid others to act as such.<sup>7</sup> But Turner's services were the most important of all. He was able to transmit from Hamburg a copy of Macnevin's Memorial and also the report of the French secret agent at London, M. Jagerhorn; he had interviews with Talleyrand about the designs of France; and in October 1797 he gave the names of the Executive Committee of the United Irishmen (himself being one), a body which

<sup>1</sup> *Secret Service*, pp. 340, 351; *Sir John Moore's Diary*, i. 285.

<sup>2</sup> Gilbert's *Documents relating to Ireland*, pp. 57, 61, 66, 75.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 26.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* 2.

<sup>5</sup> *Secret Service*, pp. 59, 94; Teeling's *Personal Narrative*, pp. 13, 15, 27, 34-35.

<sup>6</sup> Gilbert, pp. 104-14.

<sup>7</sup> *Vide The Sham Squire.*

had supreme control of the whole conspiracy.<sup>1</sup> So much being known, Lord Clonmel, the Irish Chief Justice, suggested that the leaders should be taken up under the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act and the insurrection thus prevented, and to this view Camden himself inclined.<sup>2</sup> But they were outvoted in the Privy Council by Fitzgibbon and his friends, who were so displeased with Clonmel that they no longer invited him to their Council meetings. They were really anxious for an insurrection and preferred to let matters drift, at least until evidence was available to convict the Irish leaders in open court. Camden was most anxious that Turner should come forward, but that gentleman positively declined. He told his tale in London, not to any official or minister, but to Lord Downshire, whom he interviewed in an empty house, dressed in a cloak and slouched hat. Even to Pitt he was only "Lord Downshire's friend," and no sum of money, however great, could tempt him to become a public informer.<sup>3</sup>

Early in 1798 the United Irish Society, though weak in Connaught, had 110,000 members in Ulster, more than 100,000 in Munster, and 70,000 in Leinster.<sup>4</sup> The supreme control had then been transferred from Belfast to Dublin, and was in the hands of Emmet, O'Connor, Macnevin, Bond and MacCormack. The last named was too moderate for the extreme section of the rank and file, and thinking his life was in danger he fled the country. Bond was a Dissenter and a rich merchant; Emmet and Macnevin were men of ability but knew nothing of war, nor did O'Connor, though he afterwards became a French general. On military matters Lord Edward FitzGerald's advice was usually sought, though not always acted upon. In the autumn of 1797, for instance, a deputation came to the Supreme Council from the militia sergeants then in Dublin, offering to seize the barracks and Castle, a proposal favoured by Lord Edward but rejected by

<sup>1</sup> These were Jackson, Bond, Chambers, Dickson, Father Casey, Emmet, Macnevin, Keogh, MacCormack, Turner, A. O'Connor, Orr, Teeling, Lord Edward FitzGerald, etc.

<sup>2</sup> Fitzpatrick's *Ireland before the Union*, pp. 59-60.

<sup>3</sup> Lecky, iv. 259-60.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* 252.



the Council.<sup>1</sup> There was also an intention to commence the insurrection on the following Christmas morning, but again a majority of the Council favoured waiting for the French.<sup>2</sup> In the beginning of February, however, assurances came that the French would arrive at the latest in May. Arthur O'Connor was then deputed to go to France and hasten their departure; a military committee was appointed to organize the forces at home; and Lord Edward was named Commander-in-Chief of the rebel forces.

He was then in his thirty-fifth year, a man of singularly attractive character, frank, manly, chivalrous, sincere, absolutely without guile, utterly unselfish, and of broad human sympathies. Even among his own class he had no personal enemies, though he had many bitter political opponents; and as to the masses of the people he was the best beloved of all the patriots of his time.<sup>3</sup> He was a Geraldine, married to a beautiful Frenchwoman whose character was as winning as his own; the son of Ireland's only duke, he threw rank and fortune to the winds to fight for the people, and he perished in their cause; and in his own day he was their idol, as his memory has been idolized since then. But he was a poor conspirator. Coming back from Basle to Hamburg in 1796, after his interview with Hoche, he indirectly hinted to a lady fellow-traveller what had been the object of his journey, and the lady promptly sent the news to London.<sup>4</sup> While with his regiment in America he had given abundant proof of conspicuous personal courage and had endeared himself both to officers and soldiers.<sup>5</sup> But there is no evidence to show that he was a man of superior ability, and certainly none to show that he could lead large masses of men. However, he took his position quite seriously, and proceeded to have everything in readiness for the coming campaign.<sup>6</sup>

Meanwhile the Irish Government had not been idle. The

<sup>1</sup> Miss Taylor's *Life of Lord Edward FitzGerald*, pp. 230-31; Moore's *Life*, pp. 240-41.

<sup>2</sup> Gilbert, pp. 119-20.

<sup>3</sup> Lecky, *History of Ireland*, iv. 256.

<sup>4</sup> Taylor, p. 207.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* 40.

<sup>6</sup> Lecky, iv. 258.

*Press*, which had been set up in place of the *Northern Star*, and in which Lord Edward, Macnally and O'Connor were shareholders, the last named being the editor, was itself now suppressed.<sup>1</sup> O'Connor himself, on his way to France, was arrested at Margate and tried at Maidstone for high treason. The great English statesmen, Fox, Erskine and Sheridan, as well as Lord Moira and Grattan, testified as to his character and he was acquitted; but an Irish priest named O'Coigley who accompanied him was convicted and hanged.<sup>2</sup> More important still was the arrest at Oliver Bond's house, on the 12th of March, of the Provincial Directory for Leinster. Reynolds was the informer. He was brother-in-law to Wolfe Tone and an old friend of Lord Edward's, whom he kept from the meeting, and so prevented his arrest. But all the others were arrested and their papers seized, and on the 30th of the same month martial law and free quarters were proclaimed.<sup>3</sup> General Abercromby was then in chief military command in Ireland. Nearly a year before Camden wished to have Carhampton, then Commander-in-Chief, superseded by Lord Cornwallis; but the latter refused the post unless large concessions were made to the Catholics, and hence Carhampton remained in office until November, when Abercromby was appointed. He was a Scotchman who had formerly served in Ireland, had also seen service in the East and West Indies, and was a capable soldier and a man of honour. He found the Irish army demoralized, and in the end of February issued an order declaring that they were formidable to every one but the enemy. And he soon after, and with further knowledge, added that within the year just passed every cruelty and crime that could be committed by Cossacks or Calmucks had been committed in Ireland by the army, and with the sanction of those high in office.<sup>4</sup> As in duty bound, he carried out the proclamation of the 30th of March throughout the counties of Leinster and Munster. But he was out of touch with Clare and Castlereagh, he

<sup>1</sup> Lecky, iv. 196-7.      <sup>2</sup> Madden, ii. 298-302; Lord Cloncurry, pp. 65-67.

<sup>3</sup> Plowden, ii. 676-9; Lecky, iv. 261-5.      <sup>4</sup> Lecky, iv. 203-4, 208-9.



was too mild and too merciful, and in the following month he threw up his command and returned to England.<sup>1</sup>

His successor was General Lake, who had disarmed Ulster in the previous year and who now proceeded in the counties of Leinster and Munster to drive the people to madness. A proclamation was issued on the 3rd of April demanding the surrender of all arms within ten days. Wherever no arms were surrendered the soldiers quartered themselves in the houses, took provisions and farm horses, wantonly destroyed property.<sup>2</sup> In these outrages the Ancient Britons, the Hessians and the North Cork Militia took the lead. As the people wore their hair short they were called "croppies," and a sergeant of the North Cork, nicknamed Tom the Devil, invented a new torture, which consisted of a linen or brown paper cap filled with burning pitch and then pressed on the head of the victim. Sometimes moistened gunpowder was rubbed into the hair, which was then set on fire; often an ear was cut off. As the soldiers passed along men were called to their doors and shot dead in the open day; men were half-hanged, picketed, flogged.<sup>3</sup> Some women had certainly taken the United oath, and those suspected of having done so were treated with the same cruelty as the men.<sup>4</sup> Those who wore green ribbons or green dresses had them torn off and had to submit to the grossest acts of indecency even in public. Many a peasant girl became the prey of some brutal soldier, maddened with Orange bigotry and drink. Her beauty attracted him; her innocence and modesty furnished her with no protection against his lust; he jeered at her agonizing shrieks; and often she was outraged in the presence of husband or brother or parent, who were powerless to rescue her from dishonour.<sup>5</sup>

At Drogheda a respectable citizen, because he wore a gold

<sup>1</sup> Lecky, iv. 213-15.

<sup>2</sup> Plowden, ii. 677.

<sup>3</sup> Lecky, iv. 270-76; Moore's *Lord Edward FitzGerald* (Letter of Lady Napier).

<sup>4</sup> Madden, iii. 202; Teeling, p. 73.

<sup>5</sup> Plowden, ii. 705; Gordon's *History of the Rebellion*, pp. 54-55.

ring with a shamrock device, was taken and flogged to death. In the same town a young man suspected of knowing where arms were concealed was sentenced to 5000 lashes. A portion of this punishment he endured, but being unable to stand the torture he feigned to give information (in reality he knew nothing), and while the soldiers were absent he cut his throat.<sup>1</sup> In Dublin the streets were deserted, public amusements had ceased, the names of the inhabitants had to be posted on the doors of the houses, families were flying in terror to England, the jails were full, droves of men were being sent to the fleet, the coffins were opened and searched for arms as they were carried to the grave.<sup>2</sup> In the military barracks, at the old Custom-House, at the Royal Exchange, most of all at Beresford's riding-school, the lash was unsparingly used. The shrieks of the victims could be heard even in the Castle, and a young man was seen to issue from a barrack with a burning pitch cap on his head and to plunge headlong into the Liffey, thus gladly seeking in death for relief from the tortures he endured.<sup>3</sup> Lieutenant Hepenstall of the Wicklow Militia, a giant in height and in strength, in order to extort confession, often put his handkerchief round a man's neck, threw him across his shoulder, and then walked or ran along until his victim was half-hanged, or perhaps a corpse dangling at his heels. For these exploits he has earned infamous notoriety as the Walking Gallows.<sup>4</sup> Equally infamous was Judkin FitzGerald, the High Sheriff of Tipperary. At the head of a flying column he rode through the county, flogging whomsoever he suspected. At Clogheen he flogged a shopkeeper in front of his door because he would not say who swore him a United Irishman, though the man had never been sworn at all. At Clonmel he flogged a French tutor because he suspected he was a United Irish-

<sup>1</sup> Teeling, p. 74.

<sup>2</sup> *Curran's Life*, i. 378-80.

<sup>3</sup> Plowden, ii. 695 ; Teeling, p. 75.

<sup>4</sup> After his death the following was suggested as a suitable epitaph :

Here lie the bones of Hepenstall,  
Judge, jury, gallows, rope and all.

(Fitzpatrick's *Ireland before the Union*, pp. 244-6.)



man, and above all because he found in his pocket a perfectly harmless French note, which the savage was too illiterate to understand.<sup>1</sup> It was said that in order to inflict the greater pain he had his scourges steeped in salt. The spirit of Tipperary has always been dangerous to rouse, but it must have slept in those days, when no Tipperaryman was bold enough and courageous enough to rid the earth of such a scoundrel.

The popular leaders still counselled patience, but the people could hardly be restrained. Many of them also were giving up their arms, and some turning informers, and at last the leaders themselves became anxious for war and fixed on the 23rd of May for the insurrection.<sup>2</sup> By that time the prospect had become dark. In the end of February Bonaparte pointed out to the French Directory the difficulties of a descent on England, and advised as more feasible an expedition to Malta and Egypt, which would penetrate as far as India, and defeating England there, would dry up the sources of her corrupting wealth. In accordance with this advice an army of the East was formed; the expedition to England or to Ireland was abandoned; and on the 19th of May Bonaparte with 20,000 men set sail from Toulon.<sup>3</sup>

The very same day Lord Edward FitzGerald was taken prisoner. For more than two months the Government had been on his track. He had frequently to change his place of concealment, but all the time he kept in touch with the popular leaders, and to them he proposed, but in vain, to attack the House of Lords on the 18th of May while they sat to try Lord Kingston for murder.<sup>4</sup> He had formulated the plans for the 23rd, which included the capture of Dublin, the surprise of the military camp at Loughlinstown, and the taking prisoners of the Executive Government. He had gone through the city and outside it, and had been seen by many, but not one of them betrayed him, though £1000 was offered for his capture. At last, however, Higgins, the Sham Squire, got his friend

<sup>1</sup> *Sham Squire*, pp. 216-19; Lecky, iv. 277-88.

<sup>2</sup> Gordon, pp. 65-66, 73.

<sup>3</sup> Guillon, pp. 332-5.

<sup>4</sup> Miss Taylor's *Lord Edward FitzGerald*, p. 297.

Magan, the United Irishman, to turn traitor, and on the 19th of May, Major Sirr, accompanied by Major Sandyes, Captain Ryan and some soldiers, proceeded to the house of Mr. Murphy of Thomas Street. Lord Edward was resting on a bed after dinner when Sandyes and Ryan entered the room. The first-named fired at him and wounded him slightly, the latter attacked him with a sword-cane. But Lord Edward made a fierce resistance, stabbed Sandyes with a dagger, and mortally wounded Ryan, and it was only when his arm had been broken by a pistol-shot from Sirr that he was overpowered. He was then taken to Newgate prison, where he died of his wounds on the 4th of June.<sup>1</sup> The day following his capture the new Directory of the United Irishmen was broken up by the arrest of the brothers Sheares and the flight of Lawless; and the insurrectionary movement was thus left without a leader. To make matters worse the Catholic Bishops issued a pastoral advising the people not to be deluded by impious men, but to give up their arms, stand by the existing constitution, and give allegiance to "the best of kings" and to "an enlightened legislature."<sup>2</sup> To advise the people to abandon the insurrection was certainly sound advice, as the rebellion had no chance of success; but it was surely not necessary to describe George III. as the best of kings, for Dr. Troy at least must have known that his obstinate bigotry stood in the way of Catholic concession; and as to the Irish Parliament, it had not the least share of public spirit, and was without question the most corrupt and the most contemptible legislature in Europe.

These varying causes had the effect of limiting the area of the rebellion. Warned by the informers, the Government took ample means to keep Dublin quiet; and only portions of Wicklow, Kildare, Carlow, Dublin, Meath and Queen's Counties rose. On the morning of the 24th the mail coaches to Belfast, Cork, Limerick and Athlone were stopped, and within the next three days there were encounters with the military at Naas,

<sup>1</sup> Moore's *Lord Edward FitzGerald*, pp. 277-313.

<sup>2</sup> Seward, iii. 271.



Clane, Prosperous, Kilcullen and Monasterevin in Kildare County, at Dunboyne and Tara in Meath, at Baltinglass in Wicklow, at Lucan, Rathfarnham and Tallaght in Dublin, and at Carlow town. But skill and discipline and superior arms prevailed over numbers, and in every case except at Prosperous the military were victorious.<sup>1</sup> At Prosperous the barracks and part of the town were set on fire, and the soldiers—in all about 70—were either burned to death or piked as they emerged from the burning buildings. The rebels were led by Lieutenant Esmond of the yeomanry, who in the darkness of night left his quarters at Clane, and then when Prosperous had fallen into the rebel's hands, quietly returned to Clane as if nothing had happened. His treachery, however, was discovered, and being made prisoner and sent to Dublin, he was hanged, receiving in a traitor's doom the punishment of his crime.<sup>2</sup> Disheartened by failure, a large party of rebels in Kildare made terms with General Dundas and surrendered their arms. Another party at Gibbetrath in the same county had also agreed to give up their arms, and were assembled for the purpose when General Duff came up from Limerick with 600 men. As the soldiers advanced to take up the arms of the rebels, one of the latter fired in the air, and Duff's men, feigning to believe that treachery was intended, fell on the unresisting multitude and cut them to pieces. Dundas was able to stay the slaughter, but not till 300 had been killed.<sup>3</sup>

Within a week the rebellion was stamped out, the Government had triumphed, and it seemed as if their troubles were at an end. But the fire thus so easily extinguished in the counties named was now kindled afresh in the county of Wexford, where it burned with a fiercer glow. So far but few of the Wexfordmen had become United Irishmen, and so secure did the Government feel that in the whole county there were but 600 regular troops, the garrisons being mostly composed of yeomanry and North Cork Militia. These were but little under control, and, being Orangemen, were animated by religious animosity. After the proclamation of martial law

<sup>1</sup> Gordon, pp. 84-85, 88-98.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 86-87.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 100-102.

they indulged freely in every excess, burning houses, flogging, hanging, torture. A respectable gentleman named Pery, being arrested on suspicion, had his hair rubbed with moistened gun-powder and then set on fire.<sup>1</sup> A man named Driscoll, for having two Catholic prayer-books in his pocket, with which he might have been administering unlawful oaths, was half-hanged three times and four times flogged; and a poor hedge school-master who refused to promise that if he learned anything hereafter of concealed pikes he would inform, was also flogged.<sup>2</sup> A magistrate named Hunter Gowan marched into Gorey at the head of his yeomen, one of whom, ever ready to act as executioner, was provided with a cat-o'-nine-tails and a hanging rope. The people fled in terror at their approach, and at night slept in the fields; and one night in a village so deserted the houses were searched, and one man being found, was taken out and flogged. A yeoman used the lash, another threw water on the back of the victim, whose piteous cries were heard afar off through the stillness of the night; and the following morning the place looked as if a pig had been killed there.<sup>3</sup> Across the mountains from Wicklow, Carlow and Kildare came tales of fearful cruelty, of flogging and torture, and of no quarter being given in battle.<sup>4</sup> It was said that the Orangemen had declared that they would wade ankle-deep in Papist blood. It was what the people feared much more than what they saw which made them United Irishmen; they thought it was better to fall fighting than to be massacred, and on the 26th of May Father John Murphy of Booleyvogue raised the standard of rebellion.<sup>5</sup>

His first encounter was with Lieutenant Bookey, Bookey and his little party all falling in the battle. The next day being Whit Sunday, Father John and his men took up a position on Oulart Hill. From Wexford Colonel Foster and 110 men of the North Cork Militia were sent to disperse them, but the assailants, at first victorious, were driven back by a

<sup>1</sup> Gordon, pp. 207-8.

<sup>2</sup> Hay's *History of the Rebellion*, pp. 61-63.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 74.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* 72; *Ireland before the Union*, pp. 260-64.

<sup>5</sup> Gordon, pp. 104-5.



charge of pikemen, and such was the slaughter that only the colonel himself, a sergeant and three privates escaped alive from the conflict. In the meantime a party of rebels had been driven from Kilthomas Hill, the soldiers following up their victory by every species of outrage, burning of houses, burning of Catholic churches, the slaughter of unarmed and unresisting. These outrages added to Father John's forces, already increased by his victory at Oulart, and without delay he advanced to Camolin and Ferns, both of which places he captured, and then advanced to the attack of Enniscorthy. The resistance of the military, aided by many Protestant volunteers, was desperate and prolonged; but numbers and enthusiasm carried the day, and Enniscorthy fell into the rebels' hands. The soldiers and those who aided them, or were in sympathy with them, fled in confusion to Wexford, whither the Protestants from many districts turned as to a city of refuge.<sup>1</sup> The place was strongly garrisoned; but the soldiers, who in February were formidable to every one but the enemy, had become still further demoralized since the departure of Abercromby, and the victory of the rebels at Oulart and Enniscorthy had filled them with such terror that they sent messages to Enniscorthy to Father John asking for terms. No terms, however, would be given them, and the rebels, intent on fighting, marched south and took up a position at Three Rocks, a little to the west of Wexford. General Fawcett sent from Duncannon 200 men under Colonel Maxwell, and these arrived safely at Wexford. Fawcett himself followed, and halting at Taghmon, sent forward a body of 88 men, with two guns. They were met at Three Rocks by the rebels and cut to pieces, the guns being captured and the men all killed. On receipt of this news Fawcett fell back to Duncannon, and Colonel Maxwell, who had gone out from Wexford to effect a junction with Fawcett, returned to the town, and such was the cowardice and terror of the garrison that they abandoned the place, marching to Duncannon by the sea road, and thus avoiding the rebels at Three Rocks. Burning houses and slaughtered peasants

<sup>1</sup> Gordon, pp. 110-15; Hay, p. 94.

marked their passage, and still further embittered the insurgents, who on their side took possession of Wexford.<sup>1</sup> Gorey, which had been deserted by the military on the 28th, was reoccupied by them two days later; they also held the district round Arklow; but except these places all the county of Wexford was in the rebels' hands, who were now in great strength, and had set up three encampments, one at Three Rocks, one seven miles west of Gorey, and one just outside Enniscorthy, on the summit and slopes of Vinegar Hill.<sup>2</sup>

But the insurgent leaders well knew that even had all Wexford been in their hands and every adult Wexfordman in arms, they must nevertheless, if unaided, fail. It became necessary, then, to rouse the neighbouring counties, and with this object in view a force of 5000 men was detached from the main body at Vinegar Hill, and on the morning of the 1st of June Newtownbarry was attacked. The garrison of 500 soon abandoned the town, which was occupied by the rebels; but instead of securing their position they fell to drinking, and while they were intoxicated and all heedless of danger, the military came back. After some resistance, the rebels were driven out, with the loss of 200 of their number, and thus the attempt to pass into Carlow had failed.<sup>3</sup> Three days later a more desperate attack was met with more desperate and equally successful resistance at New Ross. The rebel force made the attack from their headquarters at Carrickbyrne, under the leadership of Beuchamp Bagenal Harvey. Though a Protestant and a landlord, he was known to have popular sympathies, and as such he and Messrs. Colclough and FitzGerald, also men of property, had been imprisoned in Wexford. When Enniscorthy was taken the two latter were sent by the military authorities to negotiate with the rebels and induce them, if possible, to lay down their arms. Being unsuccessful in this, FitzGerald went over to the rebel side; Colclough returned to Wexford, where he remained in prison until the town fell into the rebels' hands, and then, having been released from prison, as well as Harvey, the latter was made commander-in-chief of the rebel

<sup>1</sup> Gordon, pp. 118-23.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 128-9.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 129-31.



army. He had no knowledge of military affairs and no capacity to lead ; but being induced to accept the position (for he was not anxious for it), he gathered the whole forces of South Wexford together at Carrickbyrne Hill, and then marched to Corbet Hill within a mile of New Ross.

On the morning of the 5th of June he summoned New Ross to surrender, but the only answer he received was to have his messenger shot dead. Whatever plans were formed for the attack on the town were dislocated by this event, for the insurgents would not be restrained, and rushing forward, under the command of John Kelly of Kilfian, they drove in the enemy's outposts. The fields in front of the Three Bullet Gate, and the space inside the gate itself, were strongly held by the enemy, who numbered in all 1200, General Johnson being in supreme command. As the rebels advanced they were met by a heavy fire from some guns placed near the gate. However, Kelly, reinforced by Cloney, and now having perhaps nearly 2000 under his command, continued to advance, and, entering the gate, was severely handled by some soldiers posted there, who opened a damaging cross fire. Still the rebels advanced, driving the enemy before them through the town and across the wooden bridge to the Kilkenny side of the Barrow. Two parties of Johnson's men still maintained their positions, one under Major Vandeleur at Irishtown, another at the market-house. And now, instead of the assailants following up the advantage gained and dislodging these two parties, they sought the public-houses for drink, which some of them too freely consumed. The others, fearing a return of Johnson's main body, and insufficiently supported by Harvey, who had sent them no reinforcements, retraced their steps and once more took up a position at the Three Bullet Gate. A second time they advanced, taking with them a howitzer ; but being unable to dislodge Vandeleur or those at the market-house, they again fell back. By this time some of the rebels in the town were drunk, and Johnson, recrossing the bridge, fell upon them, killed many, and drove the remainder back, and it seemed as if the hard-fought contest which had now lasted for hours

was over. But the rebels were not yet conquered, and after resting for a little at the Three Bullet Gate, they renewed the attack, and again drove Johnson's men before them through the town and across the river. They had shown the most desperate valour. Regardless of the fire of the enemy's cannon, they marched up to the very mouths of the guns. Again, however, their valour was disgraced by intemperance. Their gallant leader, Kelly, also fell mortally wounded, and this spread a panic even among those who were sober. Johnson took advantage of their helplessness, and recrossing the Barrow, charged with all his strength, killed many who were too drunk to resist, drove the remainder before him through the Three Bullet Gate, and after the most obstinate contest of the whole war—a contest which had lasted in all for twelve hours—New Ross remained in the hands of the English. Lord Mountjoy and 230 others fell on the English side. On the side of the rebels, who at no time exceeded 5000, the number who fell is put as low as 500 and as high as 2000, and could not be accurately ascertained. Many fell in actual battle, many while intoxicated, others fell in the pursuit, and not a few of these were non-combatants. With these losses, and the loss of some of their guns, the rebels returned to Carrickbyrne Hill.<sup>1</sup>

In the north of the county they did better than at New Ross. On the 3rd of June General Loftus arrived at Gorey with 1500 men and five pieces of artillery. Colonel Walpole also came with reinforcements from Carnew; and with this strong force Loftus, on the morning of the 4th, determined to attack the rebels at Corrigrua Hill, and perhaps break up the rebellion in Wexford. From Gorey his force marched in two divisions, the larger part under himself by Ballycanew, the smaller part under Walpole by Camolin. Somewhere near Camolin they were to join hands and fall in strength on the enemy. But the rebels had got secret information as to these movements, and leaving Loftus unmolested, they marched

<sup>1</sup> Gordon, pp. 141-7; Hay, pp. 141-6; Cloney, pp. 35-43; Taylor, pp. 78-90. Taylor puts the rebel loss at 7000, manifestly a gross exaggeration.



towards Gorey, with the design of intercepting Walpole. The latter officer was self-conceited, obstinate and incompetent, and in spite of all remonstrance from his fellow-officers, he advanced along the road in close column, without employing scouts or skirmishers. Suddenly, at a place called Tubberneering, he encountered the rebels in strong force. They had lain concealed in the fields of corn and behind the hedges which skirted the road, and when Walpole's force had reached a spot where there were high ditches topped with hedges on each side of the road, the rebels opened a murderous fire. Walpole himself was instantly shot down; many of his officers and men shared his fate; his guns were taken and turned with fatal effect against the survivors, a remnant only of whom escaped with all speed to Gorey, through which they hurried on to Arklow, leaving all their guns in the enemy's hands. Loftus, who was marching parallel to Walpole and near enough to hear the report of the firing at Tubberneering, had sent 70 of his men across the country as a small reinforcement; but their fate was that of Walpole's men, and every man of them was either killed or taken prisoner. Unable himself to reach Tubberneering in time, and unable to carry out his plans, now that Walpole had failed, Loftus retraced his steps; but finding Gorey already occupied by the enemy, who were strongly posted there and in possession of all the guns it contained, he made a cross march to Carnew, where, however, he considered himself in danger, and retreated still further to Tullow in Carlow, leaving both Gorey and Carnew to his foes.<sup>1</sup>

Had the rebels followed up their victory, Arklow would have fallen into their hands, for the garrison fled panic-stricken to Wicklow. The latter town, as well as Bray, could have been easily captured, and the rebel army, swollen by great accessions from Wicklow and other counties, would soon have been thundering at the gates of Dublin. But they wasted their time at Gorey plundering and punishing their enemies, and not until the 7th of June were they at Arklow. By that

<sup>1</sup> Gordon, pp. 138-40; Maxwell, pp. 109-11; Hay, pp. 138-40; *Halliday Pamphlets*, No. 739, pp. 40-41.

time reinforcements had been sent by the Government at Dublin, and Arklow was strongly held by 1600 men, with abundance of arms and heavy guns. General Needham was in chief command, his second being Colonel Skerret. The rebels were under Fathers John and Michael Murphy and Mr. Edmond Kyan. Pikes were abundant. It is said that 5000 had firearms, there were some heavy guns, and Kyan knew something about their management. The whole force, according to Gordon, was 27,000; but he could not know this accurately—it was a random guess—and in such a narrow space so large a number of men could not at any time have been effectually engaged. Certainly they vastly outnumbered the English, and it is also certain that they attacked with great resolution. One column advancing by the sea road captured all the enemy's advanced positions and drove them in confusion across the river into the town. But reinforcements were hurried up; the English guns played with destructive effect on the advancing masses, and the rebels were unable to cross the river and so turn the enemy's left wing, as they had intended to do. A fiercer contest raged on the Gorey road and in the fields adjoining. Under Father Michael Murphy dense masses of the rebels made repeated charges; the guns were so effectively handled by Kyan that some of the English guns had been put out of action, and the English left wing at this point had been driven from its position. Matters became so serious that Needham was about to sound a retreat. But Skerret persuaded him to continue the fight, and when Father Murphy, charging at the head of his column, was shot dead, the rebels lost courage and retreated, leaving Arklow in English hands. Though the contest lasted from four o'clock until late in the evening, and was very determined on both sides, the losses were not great. Gordon puts the rebel loss at 300, that on the English side being "very small."<sup>1</sup>

In all these contests the insurgents had shown conspicuous courage, and Castlereagh declared he could never have believed

<sup>1</sup> Gordon, pp. 154-8. Taylor (p. 135), always prone to exaggerate, puts the rebel loss at "not less than 1000."



that untrained peasants could have fought so well.<sup>1</sup> But cowardice and cruelty were not altogether wanting. Those who had at an early stage of the fight run away from New Ross brought the news to Scullabogue, at the foot of Carrickbyrne Hill, that the English were victorious, and were murdering all the Irish prisoners in their hands. In revenge, they showed an order from one of their leaders commanding that the prisoners detained in Scullabogue barn should be instantly executed. The guards refused to obey the order—in reality it was forged—but they were overpowered and the barn set on fire. A few of the prisoners emerged into the open but were at once piked; the remainder were roasted alive. Gordon puts the total number murdered at 200, Hay at less than 80; and the latter account is the more probable, as the barn was but 34 feet long and 15 wide. It was a cruel and cowardly act, quite unworthy of the Wexfordmen, and by every man of honour in the rebellion was regarded with horror.<sup>2</sup> At Vinegar Hill the prisoners taken were brought before a tribunal, and after some form of trial were put to death. There were cases where the intervention of the priests saved the prisoners, and there were cases where those put to death had been guilty of great cruelties; but there must have been many cases where no such cruelty could be proved.<sup>3</sup> Similar scenes were enacted at Wexford, where a sea-captain named Dixon, aided by his wife, who was as cruel as himself, succeeded for a short time in establishing a reign of terror. Exaggerating the cruelties of the Protestants, he roused the passions of the people to madness; overawed the governor of the town, Captain Keough, a man of humanity, and with the worst of the mob at his heels he broke open the prisons, and in one day, the 20th of June, put 97 to death. The prisoners were marched to the bridge, their crimes enumerated, and then two men in front and two behind pierced their bodies with pikes and flung them into the sea. Many more would have

<sup>1</sup> *Castlereagh Correspondence*, i. 219; Lecky, iv. 401.

<sup>2</sup> Gordon, pp. 145-7; Hay, pp. 148-51; Lecky, iv. 394-5; Taylor, pp. 91-99.

<sup>3</sup> Gordon, pp. 166-9.

been thus murdered but for the intervention of a priest, Father Curran, who rushed into the crowd, threw himself on his knees and induced the people to do the same, and then prayed in their name that God would show them the same mercy which they would show to the surviving prisoners.<sup>1</sup>

Thoroughly alarmed at the formidable character of the Rebellion, and dreading that the whole country might be lost if only a French force were landed at Wexford, the Irish Government made great efforts to extinguish the fire which they themselves had set aflame. On the 19th of June, General Needham advanced from Arklow to Gorey, and thence to Oulart Hill; Johnson drove Father Roche from Lacken Hill, and then advanced on the 20th to Bloomfield near Enniscorthy; General Duff came from Newtownbarry to Scarawalsh, where he was joined by Loftus and Dundas, the latter having come from Baltinglass. Lake in supreme command advanced south by the banks of the Slaney, and fixed his headquarters at Solsborough. The rebels from Lacken Hill retreated to Three Rocks; all others except those who garrisoned Wexford abandoned the positions they held and hastened to concentrate their strength on Vinegar Hill. Some of their chiefs proposed on the night of the 20th to fall on Lake at Solsborough, and had this been done, it is not unlikely that he would have been overwhelmed and the whole enveloping movement would have come to nothing. But the proposal was not adopted, and on the 21st the rebel army was attacked. Johnson captured Enniscorthy after an obstinate contest, and then took a leading part in the attack on Vinegar Hill. The rebels were probably more numerous than their opponents, and not less brave, and for nearly two hours they maintained the contest. But against 14,000 trained soldiers under experienced officers, and with an abundance of artillery, they were unequally matched; and they broke and fled towards Wexford, leaving thirteen small cannon to the enemy, and between 500 and 600 dead on the field of battle. The slaughter would have been much greater had not

<sup>1</sup> Gordon, pp. 180-83; Hay, pp. 202-14; *Jackson's Narrative*; Taylor, pp. 165-71.



Needham failed to come up in time, so that the rebels were able to break through. That same day Wexford surrendered to General Moore, who had advanced from Duncannon, and on the previous day had defeated Father Roche at Fooks Mill.<sup>1</sup>

Meantime there had been partial outbreaks in Antrim and Down. The rebels, led by MacCracken, attacked Antrim on the 7th of June, and with difficulty were driven off after an obstinate contest. A few days later MacCracken was captured and put to death. Another body of rebels took Saintfield and Newtownards; but a third body were defeated with heavy loss at Ballinahinch by General Nugent. Their leader, Monroe, was taken prisoner and executed at Lisburn.<sup>2</sup> Nothing further was done in Ulster. The Government, regularly forewarned of everything by informers, had been able to anticipate the rebels and defeat them; and by defeating those in arms they discouraged others from joining in the rebellion. The character of the insurrection also in Wexford reawakened the Ulstermen's hatred of popery. They would have no share in a cause which was controlled by priests; and such was the change among them, that on the 14th of June 6000 Presbyterians at Omagh volunteered to serve against the Wexford rebels.<sup>3</sup>

The strength of these rebels was now broken, and after the disasters which had overtaken them they divided into two bodies. The larger, under Father John Murphy, passed into Carlow through Scollagh Gap, on the 22nd of June, their design being to rouse Kilkenny. Their passage of the Barrow was disputed near Goresbridge by the Wexford Militia, whom they defeated, many of the militia deserting to them. On the 24th they plundered Castlecomer, but were disappointed at receiving such little support from the colliers there, and turning north into the Queen's County, they were pursued by Sir Charles Askill, who had hurried up from Kilkenny with 1600 men. The rebels retraced their steps, and at Kilcomney Hill in Carlow were overtaken on the 26th by Askill and defeated, with the loss of ten pieces of cannon and 1000 men.

<sup>1</sup> Gordon, pp. 164-6, 175; Maxwell, pp. 139-40, 144-7; *Sir John Moore's Diary*, i. 295-9.

<sup>2</sup> Lecky, iv. 416-22.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 415.

Their leader, Father Murphy, was shortly after taken prisoner and hanged at Tullow; the survivors returned to Wexford and dispersed.<sup>1</sup> A small body of only 500 under Perry were proceeding to the Wicklow mountains, but hearing that the garrison of Gorey had just wantonly butchered 50 unarmed and inoffensive peasants near that town, they attacked and defeated them, and in revenge put 37 of the friends of Government to death.<sup>2</sup>

Uniting his force with the Wicklowmen under Garret Byrne, Perry, on the 25th of June, attacked Hacketstown, but he failed to dislodge the garrison, though he burned the town.<sup>3</sup> Byrne, aided by a skilful leader named Holt, continued the struggle, and on the 20th of June defeated the Ancient Britons at Ballyallis with great slaughter, and ten days later a body of 150 yeomen at Ballyrahen Hill near Carlow.<sup>4</sup> A portion of this force now returned to Wexford and dispersed; another portion under Aylmer maintained the fight in Wicklow and Kildare; while a third body under Fitzgerald, Perry and Father Kearns marched through Kildare, Meath and Louth, and then back through Dublin to Kildare. Their hope was that the counties through which they passed would have risen, but in this they were disappointed. Their encounters with the enemy had been frequent, their sufferings great, their strength gradually diminished; and when they reached Kildare, in the middle of July, they dispersed to their homes. Fitzgerald returned with them, but Kerans and Perry had been taken prisoners and executed.<sup>5</sup>

Had Lake, after Vinegar Hill, been willing to pardon the rank and file of the rebels, even while punishing the leaders, there is no doubt that the surrender of Wexford would have ended the war. But he would make no distinction between the leaders who had planned the Rebellion and those who had been forced into it; between men like Keough who had acted with humanity and savages like Dixon. When Father Roche, seeing the futility of further resistance, came in from Three

<sup>1</sup> Cloney, pp. 81-87.

<sup>2</sup> Gordon, pp. 190-92.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 205-7.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* 209-11.

<sup>5</sup> Teeling, pp. 276-83.



Rocks to Wexford to offer terms of surrender, he was set upon by the soldiers, kicked and beaten beyond recognition, and then hanged at Wexford Bridge. In the same place were executed Captain Keough, Harvey, John Kelly and an old gentleman named Grogan, who walked with crutches to the gallows. The bodies were thrown into the river, the heads being cut off and placed on pikes over the court-house door, Mr. Kelly's head having been first kicked through the streets by the soldiers.<sup>1</sup> Elsewhere the same savage spirit was shown. After Kilcomney Hill, Asgill slaughtered the inoffending peasants as well as the rebels. In Gorey nine bodies of those slaughtered by the soldiers were found half-eaten by pigs. Destruction of property, burning of houses and of Catholic churches were common. The Hessians acquired an infamous notoriety for these plunderings, and the Hompesch dragoons for their outrages on women.<sup>2</sup> There was no law but martial law. The conversation even at the Viceregal table was all about hanging, shooting and burning, and special delight was shown at the news that a priest had been put to death. And, strangely enough, the only one in high office who showed humanity and moderation was Lord Clare.<sup>3</sup>

This was the condition of Ireland when, on the 20th of June, Camden left Dublin and was succeeded as Viceroy by Lord Cornwallis. Without any desire to shield the guilty, Cornwallis disapproved of the lawlessness and violence of the soldiery, and thinking it better to have justice tempered with mercy, he issued a proclamation, early in July, authorizing generals to grant pardons to those who laid down their arms, forsook their leaders, and took the oath of allegiance. A fortnight later an Act was passed granting an amnesty to all rebels but a few. Lake was superseded at Wexford by General Hunter, a kindly and humane man; and it was ordered that no sentence of a court-martial should be carried out until the evidence had first been submitted to the Government at Dublin. Under the influence of these milder measures, Fitzgerald, Aylmer and Barret

<sup>1</sup> Hay, pp. 238-40.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 234-5.

<sup>3</sup> *Cornwallis Correspondence*, ii. 355-8, 369.

and Garrett Byrne surrendered and were pardoned; Hackett degenerated into a leader of a predatory band and was killed in November; and though Holt still held out in Wicklow, he also soon surrendered, and was transported to New South Wales.<sup>1</sup>

In Dublin, meanwhile, a High Commission court was trying the United Irish Directory; and to ensure conviction the informer's aid was invoked. Armstrong succeeded in bringing the two Sheareses to the scaffold, and Reynolds helped to convict MacCann, Byrne and Bond. MacCann was hanged on the 19th of July; the execution of Byrne was fixed for the 25th, and that of Bond for the following day. But on the night of the 24th the other State prisoners offered to disclose all about the United Irish conspiracy, and to submit to being banished to any country at peace with England, if only their own lives and the lives of Byrne and Bond were spared. While these overtures were being considered, Byrne was executed and Bond died in prison. The Speaker, Sir John Parnell, and others were against making any terms with the prisoners; but Lord Clare was on the side of clemency, and his influence was so powerful that he carried the day; and in August, before a Committee of the Houses of Parliament, O'Connor, Emmet and Macnevin gave the fullest information, without, however, incriminating individuals, for this was specially stipulated.<sup>2</sup> After an interval, some of the lesser men were sent to Botany Bay, while twenty of the chief men were sent in March 1799 to Fort George in Scotland, where they were detained until 1802.<sup>3</sup> Ultimately both Macnevin and Emmet rose to high positions in the United States, and O'Connor became a general in the French army.

One of the reasons why the State prisoners submitted was that France had sent them no assistance, and apparently never would.<sup>4</sup> Lewins begged hard for 5000 men while Wexford was in arms,<sup>5</sup> but he begged in vain; and now, when the Rebellion was crushed, news arrived in Dublin that a French

<sup>1</sup> *Holt's Memoirs*.

<sup>2</sup> *Cornwallis Correspondence*, ii. 371-81, 384.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* iii. 78.

<sup>4</sup> Madden, iii. 60-61.

<sup>5</sup> Guillon, pp. 359-61.



force had landed at Killala on the 22nd of August. The French Directory were really unable to send a large army, as their resources had been strained by the expedition to Egypt. Their plan was to send small detachments to Ireland, so that the flame of insurrection might be kept kindled until there was time to send a larger force.<sup>1</sup> General Humbert was to sail from Rochelle with 1000 men, General Hardy from Brest with 3000, while General Kilmaine was to have a reserve army of 9000, and was to sail when Humbert and Hardy had made some progress. Co-operation was essential if success was to be gained. But Humbert, impatient of delay, refused to wait, and after compelling the merchants of Rochelle to advance him some money, he sailed from that port and arrived at Killala on the 22nd of August. Neither there nor at Ballina did he meet with any effective resistance, and leaving garrisons at both places, he hurried on to Castlebar, which he attacked on the morning of the 27th of August. General Lake was in supreme command, with General Hutchinson next. The former had arrived only the previous evening. Hutchinson had hurried on from Galway and arrived some days before, and thinking that the French would advance by Foxford, he sent forward a strong force under General Taylor to intercept them; but Humbert, turning to the west, made his way by the mountain road which passed the Windy Gap. His army was little more than 700, and he had only a few horses and two light guns. With him also were about 500 peasants, whom he had armed, but who were of little use in battle. The English had about 1700 men, cavalry and infantry, several pieces of cannon, abundance of supplies, and a position of great advantage on the rising ground north of the town. But their resistance was poor. The guns were indeed well handled, and Lord Roden's cavalry made a stand, as did a few others, at the bridge in the town; the remainder took to flight, and some few of the Kilkenny Militia deserted to the enemy. Many hundreds of prisoners and all the cannon were taken, and the French, entering the town, procured a few horses and pursued the English cavalry,

<sup>1</sup> Guillon, pp. 368-71.

who rode rapidly through the town, nor halted till they reached Tuam. Outside Castlebar, Lord Roden's Fencibles faced about and shot a few of their pursuers dead. The battle is known as the Races of Castlebar, and the place where the Frenchmen fell has ever since been known as French Hill.<sup>1</sup> Humbert endeavoured to organize a government for Connaught; but he was unable to rouse the country round, and abandoned Castlebar on the 4th of September, marching towards Sligo. He was overtaken on the 8th by Cornwallis and Lake, with an army of 20,000 men, and compelled to surrender at Ballinamuck in Longford. The French soldiers were treated as prisoners of war and sent back to France. Their Irish allies were slaughtered without mercy; and Tone and Teeling, two Irishmen who held the rank of French officers, and as such had come from France, were tried by court-martial and hanged.<sup>2</sup>

Eight days after the surrender of Humbert, Napper Tandy and a few followers landed from France at Donegal; but without men or money they could do nothing, and were glad to escape the English vessels, and reached Norway. On the 20th of the same month, Hardy's expedition, with Wolfe Tone on board the *Hoche*, sailed from Brest. Once again the winds favoured England, and the French vessels were separated at sea. Some were attacked and disabled by an English naval force under Admiral Warren, and the *Hoche* and others were captured. Tone was tried by court-martial and sentenced to be hanged, the only request he made being that, as a French officer, he should be shot. When this request was refused he cut his throat in his cell.<sup>3</sup> Before the end of the year Holt surrendered, and the Rebellion of 1798 was at an end.

<sup>1</sup> Guillon, pp. 380-85; *Cornwallis Correspondence*, ii. 409-10; *Stock's Narrative*.

<sup>2</sup> Guillon, pp. 387-8, 396-407; *Cornwallis Correspondence*, iii. 2, 11; Teeling, pp. 303-8; Maxwell, pp. 234-6.

<sup>3</sup> Guillon, pp. 407-12.



## CHAPTER IV

### *The Union*

WHEN Cromwell became Lord Protector of England in 1653, the Instrument of Government placed the legislative power of Great Britain and Ireland in his hands jointly with a Parliament of 460 members, 400 of whom were English, 30 Scotch, and 30 Irish. Catholics were ineligible to sit in Parliament, or even to vote for its members, and the 30 Irish who sat in the United Parliaments of 1654-1656 and 1658 were either officers of Cromwell's army or his personal friends.<sup>1</sup>

It does not appear that the mass of the Irish Protestants approved of this arrangement, and when the Irish Parliament was restored with the restoration of the Stuarts, no voice in Ireland was raised in protest, and for many years none to favour a legislative Union except Sir William Petty.<sup>2</sup> The Jacobite war, the confiscations which followed, the asserted claim of the English Parliament to legislate for Ireland, and the character of some of its legislation, effected a change. All power was then in the hands of a minority Protestant in religion and English in sympathy, who held possession of confiscated Catholic lands, had driven the Catholics from Parliament, and were oppressing them by penal laws; and living in the midst of a hostile population, this Protestant minority looked to England alone for a continuance of the privileges and security of their lands. With representatives in a United Parliament they would have the full right of English citizenship, nor would such an assembly prevent the importation of Irish cattle into England, or destroy the Irish woollen trade. It was considerations such as these which prompted Molyneux

<sup>1</sup> Lingard, vol. viii. 202; Mountmorres, ii. 243-4.

<sup>2</sup> Lecky, v. 121.

to wish for a legislative Union as a happiness too good to be hoped for,<sup>1</sup> and the Irish Parliament to petition for it in 1703 and in 1707 as something which would add additional lustre to the Crown.<sup>2</sup>

These advances, however, were coldly received, and for more than half a century only the obscure names of Madden and Dobbs were found to renew the appeal of Union. A greater name than these was that of Adam Smith, who thought it but just that Ireland should contribute to the public debt of Great Britain, which to some extent had been incurred on her behalf; who believed that Ireland would gain considerably by a union with Great Britain, and that without such a union "the inhabitants of Ireland are not likely for many ages to consider themselves as one people."<sup>3</sup>

It was said that Lord Rochford refused to accept the Irish Viceroyalty in 1776 unless he were allowed to repeal the penal laws and carry a measure of legislative union, and it is certain that such a union was favoured by the Duke of Rutland,<sup>4</sup> who was Irish Viceroy from 1784 to 1787, and who declared that without a union Ireland would be separated from England in less than twenty years. The action of the Irish Parliament in the questions of the Commercial Propositions and on the regency caused Rutland's views to find favour with many English statesmen, who, like him, began to fear that an independent Irish Parliament was inconsistent with the integrity of the empire. Pitt himself favoured union even in 1792. In the years that followed his opinion on the subject remained unchanged, and when the Rebellion had made Ireland helpless, he seized the opportunity for which he had waited and had no difficulty in obtaining the support of the British Parliament.

In Ireland his task was not so easy, for the century which had passed since the days of Molyneux witnessed a complete change in Irish opinion. Time had softened ancient enmities. Those who fought at the Boyne and Aughrim were long since gone, and a generation lived to whom these fierce contests

<sup>1</sup> "Case Stated," pp. 97-98.

<sup>2</sup> *Commons' Journal*, iii. 45.

<sup>3</sup> *Wealth of Nations*, p. 757.

<sup>4</sup> Lecky, v. 125-32.



were but a memory. The gulf that separated Protestant and Catholic had become less. The Parliament which had fashioned the penal code had learned toleration, and, retracing its steps, had repealed the greater part of that same code. The Catholic was still poor, but he could practise his religion without hindrance, possess his property in peace, and though yet debarred from sitting in Parliament, could vote for its members. Ceasing to be a persecutor, the Protestant landlord found his Catholic tenants inoffensive and faithful, and could often count on their passionate attachment. The descendants of Williamite and Cromwellian had come to regard Ireland and not England as their country, and with much of a patriot's pride. It was they who had formed the Volunteer army and made the Irish Parliament free. They remembered that to the English Parliament they owed the destruction of their trade. On the other hand, the Irish Parliament was their own. With all its defects, it had shown public spirit; much of its later legislation was marked by wisdom; its debates were conducted on a high level; not a few of its members were men of ability and even of genius, who would have shed lustre on the first deliberative assembly in the world; and since 1782, when the Parliament became for the first time a reality, the prosperity of the country had advanced with giant strides. In face of these facts, the Irishman who would propose to abolish this Parliament and turn his face to a British assembly would be regarded as a public enemy in Ireland, both by Protestant and Catholic, and even as early as 1785 the Duke of Rutland thought he would stand a good chance of being tarred and feathered if he proposed a union.<sup>1</sup> This was the state of public opinion when the Rebellion of 1798 opened.

In the Union debates it was often asserted on one side that the settlement of 1782 was a final adjustment, and this was denied as strongly on the other side. And yet, if language has any meaning at all, those who affirmed were right; especially when the settlement of 1782 was supplemented by the Renunciation Act of the following year. But though the British

<sup>1</sup> *Rutland Correspondence*, iii. 136.

Parliament abandoned its claim to legislate for Ireland, there were some questions that might well have been the subject of further negotiation and exact definition—questions of trade, of foreign policy, of Ireland's contribution to imperial purposes; and had these questions been explicitly settled in 1782, the Irish Parliament might have prolonged its existence, and with advantage both to Ireland and to Great Britain. These questions might have been settled had there not been on the English side a selfish commercial jealousy, and on the Irish a sensitive dread that its newly-acquired rights were being invaded; and in the case of Orde's proposition and again on the Regency Bill these causes operated for evil. The English manufacturers induced Pitt to so modify the commercial propositions that they became less acceptable in Ireland. Grattan regarded them as an attack on the Irish Constitution;<sup>1</sup> compromise and conciliation were wanting, and a great opportunity for a permanent peace was lost. And in the Regency Bill Irish legislators were induced to take the action they did, not for the sake of the Prince of Wales, but rather because they wished to assert their independence.

The consequences were disastrous. Even in their amended form Pitt expected the commercial propositions would have been accepted by the Irish Parliament, and was angry because they had not been; and his anger grew after the dispute on the regency. He had already begun to retract the liberal professions of his earlier years, and horrified by the excesses of the French Revolution, he conceived a disgust for popular rights, and had become a coercionist and a reactionary. Autocratic and overbearing, with the British Parliament subservient to his every wish, he would have no real reform of the Irish Parliament, dreading that such an assembly would clash with the Parliament of Great Britain; and after the events of 1785 and 1789, he gradually drifted to the conviction that the safety of the empire depended on a legislative union. Such a union would undoubtedly have been hindered by the grant of Catholic emancipation, and would be helped by a rebellion; and the

<sup>1</sup> *Rutland Correspondence*, iii. 233.



charge has been made that Pitt actually provoked the Rebellion of 1798 for the purpose of carrying the Union, a charge which Mr. Lecky thinks too wildly extravagant to require refutation.<sup>1</sup> And yet, let the facts be remembered and the accusation does not appear to be so extravagant. After the hopes raised by Fitzwilliam had been disappointed, Pitt saw that Catholics were deeply mortified, and that large numbers had become United Irishmen. He knew and approved of the illegalities of Carhampton and Lake, of the outrages of the Orangemen, of the stirring up by the Irish Government of religious animosities; and if there was to be no Parliamentary reform or Catholic Emancipation, no redress of admitted and glaring grievances, if corruption and virulence and illegality were to continue, he must have expected that from such causes the effect would be rebellion. The man who deliberately does an evil act is plainly culpable, but so also is he who does something from which an evil act will certainly follow—as between the two the culpability is merely a matter of degree; and if Pitt's guilt in regard to the Rebellion is not of the former character, it is at least of the latter.

At what precise period Pitt's colleagues in the Ministry were brought to adopt his views on the Union does not appear; but when the Rebellion of 1798 was over, Pitt himself believed that the moment for action had come. He was able to bend his colleagues to his own imperious will, and Cornwallis, on his arrival in Ireland, was directed to quietly feel his way and ascertain on what extent of Irish support he could rely. Cornwallis himself was a convinced Unionist from the first. Lord Clare, who told the electors of Trinity College in 1782 that "he had always been of opinion that the claims of the British Parliament to make laws for this country is a daring usurpation on the rights of a free people,"<sup>2</sup> was now for a Union, and had even urged his Unionist views on the English Ministry for years. Lord Castlereagh, who as a patriot told the Down electors in 1790 that he loved the cause of the people, and that

<sup>1</sup> Lecky, v. 145.

<sup>2</sup> O'Flanagan, *Lives of the Irish Lord Chancellors*, ii. 166.

he revered the Constitution "with that ardour of affection which a youthful heart dictates and which your generous confidence demands,"<sup>1</sup> was now a reactionary and a coercionist, and in complete sympathy with Clare's views. Mr. Isaac Corry, M.P., a patriot for years, had also turned his coat, and so also had Lord Yelverton, Lords Shannon and Ely; Mr. Connolly and Mr. John Beresford were also for Union; and these four, as borough-owners, commanded many votes in Parliament. Lords Kilwarden and Carleton, two judges, were hesitating and doubtful, and so also was Lord Pery, who, as Mr. Sexton Pery, had filled for many years the office of Speaker, while the Duke of Leinster would give no opinion.<sup>2</sup> Some of the Protestants favoured the measure, fearful that if Catholic Emancipation were granted without a Union, Parliamentary reform would follow and give the Catholics an ascendancy in the Irish Parliament; the Protestant landlords especially, dreading such a contingency, trembled for their privileges and their lands. The Catholics, on the other hand, had lost all hope of getting justice from the Irish Parliament, which had shown itself so bigoted and so corrupt, and favoured a Union, as it would free them from Orange ascendancy; and Dr. Troy and Lords Kenmare and Fingal were early on the Unionist side.<sup>3</sup> Finally, the Ulster linen manufacturers, knowing that free trade with Great Britain would enrich them and that a Union would be accompanied by free trade, were in favour of a legislative Union.<sup>4</sup>

But all this did not foreshadow that a majority in the Irish Parliament, still less outside it, were on the side of Clare and Castlereagh. After all, a few linen manufacturers, thinking only of pecuniary advantages for themselves, did not express the feeling of Ulster Presbyterianism. Dr. Troy and Lords Kenmare and Fingal were not the stamp of men whom the Catholic masses would select to represent them in any political

<sup>1</sup> *Grattan's Life*, iv. 465.

<sup>2</sup> Lecky, v. 159-60.

<sup>3</sup> Ingram, pp. 85-86; *Cornwallis Correspondence*, iii. 8; *Castlereagh Correspondence*, ii. 36, 172.

<sup>4</sup> Lecky, v. 172.



matter. Not all the Protestants thought that there was danger to their privileges or estates from an Irish Parliament, even if a few Catholics were admitted as members. Beresford and Connolly, and Lords Ely and Shannon, would certainly command some votes, but these were only a small proportion of the borough-owners. Corry and Yelverton represented only themselves, and as for Clare and Castlereagh, they could command the full strength of pensioners and placemen, which was a good deal, and they had the resources of Government at their back, but beyond this they could not go.

The Government were anxious to obtain a majority, who would vote rather from conviction than from interest, and with the object of convincing the unconvinced, a pamphlet was published in the end of 1798 with the title: *Arguments for and against a Union between Great Britain and Ireland*. It was published anonymously, but it was soon known that its author was the Under-Secretary Cooke, and that it had been published with the sanction and approval of Government, and might be taken as the official statement of the Unionist case. It was an able statement, which omitted no point that could tell, and in turn appealed to every interest. It was a time, Cooke said, which called for a closer union with Great Britain, seeing that both Ireland and Great Britain were equally menaced by the all-devouring ambition of France. Such a Union as was contemplated would end jealousies and rivalries between the two Parliaments; it would end exceptional legislation for either country, as both countries would henceforth be governed by the same code of laws; it would secure Protestants in their lands and privileges, and preserve the Protestant Church from a Catholic ascendancy, which would surely follow from a reform of the Irish Parliament. At the same time, it would leave the Catholics such rights as they already had, obtain Government provisions for their clergy with a commutation of tithes, and leave the door open for further concessions. Such a Union would foster trade by freely admitting Irish goods to all the markets open to Great Britain; it would attract British capital to Ireland, and thus develop her

resources; and the example of Scotch Union was advanced to show what advantages such a Union had brought in its train.<sup>1</sup>

It will be seen that much of this was prophecy, and prophecy is not argument, nor did the pamphlet make many converts, but on the contrary helped to disclose the forces of the Opposition. The Bar met in December, and under the leadership of Mr. Saurin a resolution was carried by 166 to 32, declaring that "a legislative Union was an innovation which it would be highly dangerous and improper to propose at the present juncture."<sup>2</sup> The attorneys followed the lead of the barristers. The magistrates and Common Council, with the merchants and bankers of Dublin, expressed their abhorrence of a measure which would deprive the Irish people "of their constitutional right and immediate power of legislating for themselves." The fellows and students of Trinity College called upon their representatives to oppose any such measure; and the gentry and freeholders of Dublin, Westmeath and Galway were equally strong, the Galway men denying the power of the Irish Parliament to vote away the independence of the nation, and describing the Unionists as enemies to their country.<sup>3</sup> Foster, the Speaker, threw the immense weight of his abilities and experience into the Anti-Unionist scale, as did also Sir John Parnell, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and FitzGerald, the Prime Sergeant; and among the lawyers on the same side was every man who shone at the Bar. One of the ablest of them, Bushe, answered Cooke in a pamphlet, *Cease your funning*, and an Anti-Unionist paper was started in Dublin, the chief contributors to which were Grattan, Bushe, Burrowes and Plunkett; the two latter, like Bushe, men of the finest intellect.<sup>4</sup> Lord Ely, the borough-owner, who had been in favour of the Union, now changed

<sup>1</sup> *Arguments for and against a Union Considered* (Fourth edition). Dublin, 1799.

<sup>2</sup> *Cornwallis Correspondence*, iii. 18; *Grattan's Life*, v. 16.

<sup>3</sup> Coote, *History of the Union*, pp. 28-30. Dublin, 1802.

<sup>4</sup> *Plunkett's Life*, i. 114-15, 124.



sides and told Castlereagh that its only advocates were "men who do not belong to us and absentees who never again intend to visit Ireland."<sup>1</sup> The extent of the opposition disheartened Cornwallis, and early in 1799 he had to confess, to his no small chagrin, that even the Catholics on whom he relied were becoming cautious and distrustful.<sup>2</sup>

But Pitt and Portland had put their hands to the plough and were determined not to look back. The latter authorized Cornwallis to assure all those having political influence that the Ministry would press on the Union "as essential to the well-being of both countries, and particularly to the security and peace of Ireland as dependent on its connexion with Great Britain," and that "the conduct of individuals upon this subject will be considered as the test of their disposition to support the King's Government."<sup>3</sup> And when the Irish Parliament met in January 1799, the question of legislative Union was at once raised by the following paragraph in the Viceroy's speech: "The more I have reflected on the situation and circumstances of the kingdom, considering, on the one hand, the strength and stability of Great Britain, and, on the other, those divisions which have shaken Ireland to its foundations, the more anxious I am for some permanent adjustment which may extend the advantages enjoyed by our sister kingdom to every part of the Island. The unremitting industry with which our enemies persevere in their avowed object of endeavouring to effect a separation of this kingdom from Great Britain must have engaged your particular attention, and His Majesty commands me to express his anxious hope that this consideration, joined to the sentiment of mutual affection and common interest, may dispose the Parliaments in both kingdoms to provide the most effectual means of maintaining and improving a connexion essential to their common security, and of consolidating, as far as possible, into one firm and lasting fabric, the strength, the power, and the resources of the British Empire."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Cornwallis Correspondence*, iii. 37.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 28-29.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 20.

<sup>4</sup> *Plunkett's Speeches*, p. 41.

The conduct of the whole question in the House of Commons, and very largely outside also, was left in the hands of Lord Castlereagh. He had been for a considerable time discharging the duties of Chief Secretary ; Pelham, who actually held the office, being absent in England. But in the previous November Pelham resigned, partly because of ill-health, partly also because he did not approve of the Union,<sup>1</sup> and Castlereagh was formally appointed to succeed him. The King did not favour having such an office in an Irishman's hands, but an exception was made in the case of Castlereagh, and for the curious reason that he was so unlike an Irishman.<sup>2</sup> Certainly the kindness, the sympathy, the warmth of heart of the Irishman were not his, for he was cold and callous and heartless ; but it would be equally unfair to compare him with an honourable English gentleman, for treachery and duplicity and hypocrisy were among the prominent features of his character. He had completely turned his back on the liberal opinions of his earlier years, and in the terrible years of 1796 and 1797, and during the horrors of 1798, he favoured every severity of Government, condoned every illegality, employed the vilest of men as his instruments—men without a shred of character—the renegade politician, the partisan judge, the perjured sheriff, the spy, the informer, the convicted criminal, the ferocious military officer, the soldier who ravished and burned and desecrated the temple of God. With a graceful person and insinuating manners, he concealed under a plausible exterior a heart black as night, a nature to whom no depth of infamy was too deep. He appeared to love cruelty for its own sake, and to pity was an utter stranger. The open, the candid, the honest among men he hated, because they were so unlike himself ; love of country he did not understand ; public virtue he despised ; bribery and corruption he loved to employ ; he walked on the tortuous rather than on the straight road, and could do nothing with clean hands.

Such a man had no difficulty in carrying out the directions of Portland, to consider the support of the Union as the test

<sup>1</sup> Lecky, v. 149-50.

<sup>2</sup> *Castlereagh Correspondence*, i. 424-44.



of loyalty, and immediately Sir John Parnell was dismissed from the Chancellorship of the Exchequer, and was succeeded by Isaac Cory ; FitzGerald's office of Prime Sergeant was given to an obscure barrister named Daly, because he was a Unionist ; and Mr. George Knox and Mr. Claudius Beresford resigned their seats on the Revenue Board, knowing that as Anti-Unionists they were certain to be dismissed.<sup>1</sup> Several votes were thus secured by promises of office or threats of dismissal, and these, added to the pensioners and placemen, gave Castlereagh a formidable body of supporters. But the Opposition was also formidable, even in numbers, still more so in ability ; and against such men as Knox, Ponsonby, Parnell, Barrington, FitzGerald, Parsons and Plunkett, such men as Blaquiere and the Knight of Kerry, or even Castlereagh himself, were but poorly matched. Mr. William Smith indeed had talent, as had Castlereagh, who on the Address made an able speech. Disclaiming any motive but patriotism and public interest, he at one time pleaded and entreated, and then became menacing and defiant, and when Barrington charged the Government with corruption, Castlereagh jumped to his feet and shouted to have these words taken down. He assured the members that assenting to the Address did not mean assenting to the Union, it was merely a willingness to consider the question. But Parnell moved as an amendment that the Constitution of 1782 should be maintained, and it was on this the debate arose—a debate which began on the 22nd of January and continued without interruption for twenty-two hours.<sup>2</sup>

As might have been expected, such men as Knox, Ponsonby, Parnell and Barrington spoke well ; but the most powerful speech of the debate was made by Plunkett, who rose on the morning of the 23rd, just as there came through the windows the first streaks of dawn. Passion and pathos and solemn warning, fierce invective, scathing sarcasm, unanswerable argument, the debating power and constitutional knowledge of a great lawyer and a great orator marked this splendid effort. Repeating the language of Barrington, he challenged the

<sup>1</sup> Lecky, v. 213.

<sup>2</sup> Barrington, pp. 321-3.

Government to take down his words, but the Government remained silent. He spoke of Castlereagh with contemptuous scorn as "an assuming stripling," a young philosopher who had been transplanted from the nursery to the Cabinet to outrage the feelings and understanding of the country," "a green and sapless twig"—these latter words being especially severe, as Castlereagh was childless. He distinctly denied the right of the Irish Parliament to vote away its own existence; the members were elected to make laws not legislatures. As for himself, he would resist to the last gasp of his existence, and when he felt the hour of his dissolution approaching, he would, like the father of Hannibal, take his children to the altar and swear them to eternal hostility against the invaders of his country's freedom.<sup>1</sup> Some of the trimmers on the Anti-Unionist side who had been meditating desertion were perhaps convinced, or perhaps cowed, by this great speech; and when the division was taken, Castlereagh had only a majority of one, 105 being on the Opposition and 106 on the Government side.

Two days later another long debate arose on the report of the Address, when Parsons moved that the paragraph relating to the Union should be expunged. Parsons and Ponsonby were at their best, and even in so corrupt an assembly their arguments and eloquence had such an effect that the Government was defeated, the Unionists mustering only 106, while there were 111 on the side of the Opposition. Dublin went wild with joy. When the numbers were announced the ladies in the gallery could with difficulty restrain themselves, but outside there was no restraint, and the people shouted themselves hoarse. Ponsonby and his friends when they appeared were greeted with deafening cheers, while the Unionist members were hissed and hooted. The Speaker's carriage was drawn through the streets by an enthusiastic and cheering crowd, bonfires were lighted, houses illuminated, even the Post Office, a Government establishment, was a blaze of light. Those who refused to illuminate their windows had them

<sup>1</sup> *Plunkett's Speeches*, pp. 41-52.



broken ; and this happened at the house of Lord Clare, which was attacked by an angry mob.<sup>1</sup>

On the other hand, the Irish House of Lords readily consented to the Address, which was carried by a majority of 52 to 16. Nor had Pitt any difficulty in carrying his Union Resolution in the British House of Commons by 140 to 15, and in the British House of Lords the same resolutions were carried without opposition.<sup>2</sup> Mr. Pitt's speech on the occasion was long and elaborate and eloquent, and delivered with all the authority which comes from a great position and splendid talents. Laying special emphasis on what had taken place, on the Commercial Propositions and on the Regency, he conjured up other visions perhaps of fatal divisions which might arise between two independent legislatures. He ascribed the ills of Ireland to the situation of the country, the ignorance of the people, the division of classes, the state of property, religious distinctions, to "the rancour which bigotry engenders and which superstition rears and cherishes."<sup>3</sup> If the proposed Union could not cure all these ills it would at least, like the patent medicine, cure all that could be cured. It would give Ireland greater security and greater wealth, more extended trade, attract British capital to her shores, bring warring classes together, soften the severity of religious animosities, leave the landlord his property, the Protestant his Church, and to the Catholic would open the door for further concessions.<sup>4</sup> Such a Union was not subjecting Ireland to a foreign yoke, but one entered into by free consent, on just and equal terms, binding two great nations which want nothing but that indissoluble connexion to render both invincible." This was again going over the ground covered by Cooke, and in reality contained nothing new. Nor had Sheridan, who led the Opposition, any difficulty in discrediting the case made, though his arguments and his eloquence were in vain.

Less brilliant than Sheridan, the Irish Speaker, Foster, made, in the Irish Parliament, even a more convincing case.

<sup>1</sup> Lecky, v. 227.

<sup>2</sup> Stanhope's *Pitt*, iii. 177-8.

<sup>3</sup> Gifford's *Pitt*, vi. 143-54.

<sup>4</sup> Stanhope, iii. 173-6.

For many years he had filled in succession the offices of Chancellor of the Exchequer and Speaker, and had filled both with credit. His mental capabilities were solid rather than showy ; his knowledge was never superficial ; he dug down to the root of things ; and in financial and commercial matters, as well as those relating to the Irish Constitution, he spoke with the authority of an expert. In opposition to the patriots he had supported Orde's Commercial Propositions ; he was unalterably opposed to Parliamentary Reform and Catholic Emancipation ; during the rebellion and the events which led to it he supported every severity and every illegality of Government ; and going further even than Clare, when the Rebellion was over he resented with bitterness and indignation the milder measures of Cornwallis. His attitude on public questions augmented the influence which his talents gave him with his fellow-members, for the spirit of the Irish Parliament then was one of ascendancy and bigotry. On such a man, a pronounced and aggressive reactionary, Pitt counted with certainty, and great was his chagrin when he was compelled to reckon with his opposition.

Foster had been prevented by his position from taking part in the earlier debates on the Union ; but in May the Opposition, to weaken the Unionist cause, brought in a Regency Bill enacting that henceforth whoever was appointed Regent *de facto* in Great Britain became *de jure* Regent in Ireland. It was when this Bill had reached the committee stage that Foster, no longer in the Chair, stated his views on the Union, and in a powerful and closely-reasoned speech which occupied more than four hours in its delivery.

Relying on experience rather than on prophecy, he recalled how loyal to Great Britain the Irish Parliament had always been. It was loyal long before 1782, when, even with its limited powers, it might have refused to vote the necessary supplies ; it was loyal in the days of the Volunteers ; loyal when it put down the great Rebellion of the previous year. The Bill before the House would remove any cause of friction between the two Parliaments should a question of regency ever again arise.



As to Orde's Propositions, he contended against Pitt that the difference was commercial rather than constitutional; that these Propositions had been at first unanimously adopted in Ireland and rejected only when English commercial jealousy had made them inequitable and one-sided. And all cause of friction had since been removed by the Irish Parliament when it adopted the English Navigation Act, and followed the British Parliament in recognizing the monopoly of the East India Company in the Eastern Seas. If the Irish Parliament at any future time passed legislation injurious to Great Britain, was it not true that no such legislation could take effect until it passed the Great Seal of England, and could not Great Britain by these means enforce an effective veto? An independent Parliament had brought Ireland, in a few years, an amount of prosperity unexampled in her history. The extinction of such a Parliament would widen the area of disaffection, disarrange trade, increase taxation, and, adding to the number of absentees, would remove many from Ireland who were centres of culture, and thus retard rather than advance the progress of Ireland in civilization.<sup>1</sup>

Whatever effect this able speech had in the Irish Parliament, it had much outside, but it had none in weakening the determination of Pitt and Portland. The Union must be carried. Anything which tended to weaken the case for it must be opposed, and hence the Regency Bill, which granted everything for which Pitt had contended in 1789, was now defeated by Castlereagh. There was to be no measure for the commutation of tithes, nor for the payment of Catholic or Presbyterian clergy, passed in an Irish Parliament, nor was Catholic emancipation to be granted except accompanied by a Union.<sup>2</sup> The Ministry wanted Ireland to share their conviction that a Union was best both for Ireland and the Empire, and though Pitt feared that the progress of conviction would not be rapid, he believed it would come, and perhaps sooner than is now (February 1799) expected.<sup>3</sup> To bring

<sup>1</sup> Lecky, v. 264-76.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 246-7.

<sup>3</sup> Stanhope, iii. 177.

about this desirable event everything was lawful. The borough-owners were to be compensated; those who opposed the Union were to be dismissed from all offices they or their friends held under Government; and to terrorize others it was announced publicly to what these dismissals were due. Those who voted for Castlereagh were rewarded with places and pensions and peerages, or promotions in the peerage.

Grattan and his friends welcomed the Place Bill of 1793 as a measure for the purification of Parliament, for it compelled each member on being appointed to a Government office to resign his seat.<sup>1</sup> But no distinction was made between lucrative and nominal offices, a fatal omission of which Castlereagh took advantage. For there were members who shrank from supporting a Union which they condemned, but were willing, for some consideration, by accepting some nominal office, to vacate their seats and allow a Unionist to be returned; and by this means above 63 Government supporters were secured. On the other hand, Colonel Cole, M.P., an Anti-Unionist, being ordered abroad to join his regiment, applied for the nominal office of the Escheatorship of Munster, taking care, however, that another Anti-Unionist, Mr. Balfour, would succeed him in Parliament. His request was refused, and thus he was unable to vacate his seat.<sup>2</sup>

Such were the means taken to obtain a Unionist majority in Parliament; nor were there less effective means taken to influence public opinion beyond its walls. Though the Rebellion was over and no fresh Rebellion feared, troops were hurried from England until the army in Ireland amounted to 137,000 men. To put down a partial outbreak of crime, a Coercion Act was passed in June 1799 placing all Ireland at the option of the Viceroy under martial law; and as all Anti-Unionists were considered disloyal, this Act was freely used to put them down. The Government took care to appoint as High Sheriffs strong Unionist partisans, and to place the military at their disposal; while in the case of Anti-Unionist Sheriffs, their authority was flouted and ignored by military

<sup>1</sup> Barrington, pp. 333-4.

<sup>2</sup> *Grattan's Life*, v. 40-41.



officers. In Sligo and Antrim public meetings summoned to petition against the Union were proclaimed as illegal. In the King's County a similar public meeting to be held in the Court-house was stopped by the High Sheriff at the head of the military, and with two six-pounder guns turned on the Court-house door.<sup>1</sup>

County meetings in Kildare and the Queen's County were also stopped. And a case is mentioned where a gentleman who addressed a letter against the Union to a Kerry newspaper was taken up as a disloyal man and lodged as prisoner in Kilmainham Jail.

All these methods of influencing public opinion Castlereagh was quite willing to employ, and to have his hands free for such work he prorogued the Parliament in June. But Cornwallis was a more honourable man, convinced indeed that the Union was a good thing, and that Parliament and people ought to be persuaded into it, but shrinking from the employment of dishonourable means to obtain votes or influence opinion. From the first he favoured conciliating the Catholics, thinking it a desperate measure for the British Government to ally themselves in Ireland with a small party of reactionaries and bigots.<sup>2</sup> This small party, disapproving of his milder measures, attributed to him the defeat of the Union in January, and by them he was furiously assailed. Cornwallis himself believed the defeat showed that the country was not ripe for the measure, and suggested that for the present it should be postponed;<sup>3</sup> but his will was overborne by the stronger wills of Pitt and Castlereagh, and he was compelled to go on. It was wearisome work for a man of honour—"dirty business" which it was the wish of his life to avoid. He was bartering and bargaining with men who had no fixed principles, who would acknowledge in April that nothing but a Union could save Ireland, and in May would vote against it; men whom he told his friend Ross he longed to kick rather than court.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Grattan's Life*, v. 50-51, 93-95; MacNeill, pp. 126-8.

<sup>2</sup> *Cornwallis Correspondence*, ii. 415.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* iii. 51.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* 89, 100-101.

In pursuance of the same dirty business he made a tour in Munster in August and another in Ulster in October, seeking addresses in favour of the Union, the object being to show that the Opposition were wrong in asserting that public opinion was against the measure. On these journeys, if an address was to be presented, no town was too small to be visited, the signatures of all classes and creeds were eagerly welcomed, and yet the results were poor. In the County of Down only 415 signed for the Union, 17,000 against it; in all Ireland only 7000 petitioned for Union, while 110,000 freeholders were on the opposite side; so that the Anti-Unionists were to their opponents in the proportion of 14 to 1. And this was in spite of bribes and promises, of threats and intimidation, of partisan sheriffs and browbeating landlords, of martial law and prancing dragoons.<sup>1</sup>

The position of the Catholics deserves special notice. The great mass of them did not understand political questions, and while they would gladly have welcomed a commutation of tithes, they were indifferent to the question of Union. Nor did the question arouse any enthusiasm among the more educated of the same creed, unless we except Lords Kenmare and Fingal and a few other cringing courtiers who loved to study the caprices of the Viceroy and bask in the sunshine of Castle favours. The clergy, who had seen their churches burned, their villages laid waste, their people flogged and outraged, their clerical brethren driven into exile or perishing on the scaffold, had lost all hope of redress from an Irish Parliament; but if they could have obtained Emancipation from it they would have preferred it to seeking redress from a foreign Parliament.

Among the Bishops the same views prevailed. One of the ablest of their number, Dr. Moylan of Cork, was a welcome guest at the residence of the Duke of Portland, and was enthusiastic for a Union. Equally enthusiastic, and with a more potent voice in the councils of the Bishops, was the Archbishop of Dublin, Dr. Troy. His piety, his learning, his

<sup>1</sup> *Grattan's Life*, v. 50-51; *Lecky*, v. 314.



administrative capacity were recognized at Rome, and he had been promoted from the See of Ossory to Dublin, and had been for a time also Administrator of the See of Armagh.<sup>1</sup> The bent of his mind was to support authority, even when authority and tyranny were identified; he had a horror of political agitation and popular movements; and though he denounced and excommunicated Whiteboys and Rightboys and Defenders, he had no words of condemnation for the wrongs which called these secret societies into existence.<sup>2</sup> During the dark days of 1798 he ceased not to be a courtier, and was often a visitor at the Castle. The scenes he witnessed made him cautious and even timid, and to a Government clerk we find him apologizing because one of his priests in writing to him called him "My Lord."<sup>3</sup> It is quite certain that in what he did he was honest and sincere, though we read with a shock that he asked for and obtained for his nephew a petty Government office, and this even after 1800, when all the world knew that the Catholic Bishops had trusted and had been shamefully betrayed.<sup>4</sup>

Dr. Troy was satisfied, in December 1798, to have the Union pass if it contained no clause barring any future concessions.<sup>5</sup> He was satisfied, in the following February, with the speech of Pitt that at some future time something might be done for the Catholics, dependent, however, on their own conduct and on the temper of the times.<sup>6</sup> And he eagerly welcomed the vague promises of the Irish Government, though unauthorized by Portland, and in return induced all the Irish Archbishops and six of the Bishops to accept, on the appointment of all Irish Bishops, the veto of the British Government, and to notify the nomination of parish priests to Government, giving a certificate of their loyalty.<sup>7</sup> His energies were incessant; but though naturally able to influence many Bishops, and to a lesser extent the priests, the small number of

<sup>1</sup> *Spicilegium Ossoriense*, iii. 399.

<sup>2</sup> *Cornwallis*, iii. 20.

<sup>3</sup> *Lecky*, v. 204.

<sup>4</sup> *Spicilegium Ossoriense*, iii. 614.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* 365, 370-71, 384, 477-8.

<sup>6</sup> *Viceroy's Post-Bag*, pp. 177-8.

<sup>7</sup> *Stanhope's Pitt*, iii. 174-5.

those who petitioned for the Union, part of whom only were Catholics, shows that his success with the laity was not remarkable. The Bishop of Meath would not declare publicly for the Union, nor would his priests, and the laity of the diocese were against it.<sup>1</sup> The Archbishop of Tuam had to confess that his people called him an Orange Bishop in the pay of the Government.<sup>2</sup>

Mr. O'Connell made his first public speech at a meeting of the Catholics of Dublin (January 1800), and declared amid thunders of applause that they would rather trust to their Protestant fellow-countrymen than lay their country at the feet of foreigners, and that if a Union was to be the alternative of the re-enactment of the penal laws, they would prefer the re-enactment of the penal laws.<sup>3</sup>

Grattan was so enraged at the attitude of Dr. Troy and some of the Bishops and priests that he called them "a band of prostituted men engaged in the service of Government."<sup>4</sup> But if a good many of them, perhaps a majority, were for the Union, it is quite certain that they were not acting from mercenary motives, and that only a small number of the Catholic laity were on the same side, so that Grattan's censures were unjust.

This was the state of things when the Irish Parliament met for its last session in January 1800. Of the 300 members of the House of Commons, as it was then constituted, 116 were placemen; only 128—those from the counties and cities and boroughs with an open franchise—could in any sense be considered as popular representatives, the remaining 172 being returned for close boroughs, nominated by the Crown or private patrons, and, according to the usage of the time, bound to vote as their patrons directed.<sup>5</sup> In such an assembly it was easy for the Crown to obtain a majority, but a bare majority, especially when obtained by bribery and corruption, was insufficient in Mr. Pitt's view; and he wrote

<sup>1</sup> *Castlereagh Correspondence*, ii. 437-8.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 347.

<sup>4</sup> Ingram, p. 159.

<sup>3</sup> MacNeill, p. 134.

<sup>5</sup> MacNeill, pp. 95-96.



privately to Cornwallis not to proceed with the Union unless he could be certain of a majority of at least fifty.<sup>1</sup> This majority was not available at the opening of the session, for there were no less than twenty-five seats vacant, nearly all of which had been specially vacated to let in Unionists. Castlereagh wanted a little time to have these vacancies filled, and hence there was not a word about the Union in the Viceroy's Speech. Sir Lawrence Parsons, however, spoiled this arrangement by moving an amendment, that the Constitution of 1782 should be maintained. Castlereagh opposed the amendment, declaring boldly that the country was now for the Union, and that nineteen counties had petitioned in its favour. A fresh debate followed, lasting for eighteen hours, and in which, though Castlereagh and Corry spoke well, the weight of eloquence and argument was on the opposite side. Indeed, the speeches of Parsons himself, and those of Fitzgerald, Moore, George Ponsonby, Burke and Plunkett, were worthy of the greatest assembly in the world.<sup>2</sup>

But the great event of the debate was the reappearance of Grattan. With difficulty he had been able to get a seat; with great reluctance he had consented to re-enter Parliament, and he had only yielded to the combined pleadings of the Opposition chiefs and his wife. The close borough of Wicklow had been placed at his disposal by its patron, Mr. Tighe, and a friendly sheriff hastened the return and forwarded the writ to Dublin. He was then in feeble health, as he had been since his return from England in the previous year, and when his friends called at his house in Dublin on the morning of the 16th to take him to the House of Commons, he querulously remarked, "Why don't they let me die in peace?" His wife urged him to go with them, and dressing him in the uniform of the Volunteers, she handed him his loaded pistols. It was not unlikely that some agent of the Government might attack him on his way, and Grattan's friends seemed to expect this; Mrs. Grattan nevertheless remarking that even so he should go, and that

<sup>1</sup> Barrington, p. 357.

<sup>2</sup> Coote, pp. 298, 313; *Grattan's Life*, v. 78-88.

he could have no nobler ending than to shed his blood for Ireland.<sup>1</sup>

He entered the House leaning on the arms of Mr. W. B. Ponsonby and Mr. Arthur Moore, and having taken the oath, he proceeded to make one of the greatest speeches of his life. Every point that could tell was made with the skill of an old Parliamentary hand. And the effect was heightened by the circumstances in which the speech was delivered. Grattan was so weak that he was unable to stand, and had to obtain the permission of the House to speak seated. His sharp features had become sharper and thinner, his body was wasted by disease and suffering, his head was bowed, the light in his eye had grown dim, his voice was almost inaudible. But even in such difficulties genius asserted itself, mind triumphed over matter. Back again in the scenes of his old triumphs, he recalled the events in which he had been the central figure. From his side some of the old friends were gone, but some were with him still; while before him were those who had traduced him and sought to sacrifice his life, and these same men were now laying violent hands on the temple which his genius had reared. After the first few sentences he gathered strength, his voice became resonant, his head was thrown back, the light of battle was in his eye. The foes who had assailed him were now assailed, their prophecies derided, their arguments proved fallacious, their fictions exposed, and the methods by which the Union was sought to be carried condemned with an energy of invective, a wealth of epithet, a severity of satire, which cast even the great efforts of Bushe and Plunkett into the shade.<sup>2</sup> It was all in vain. Castlereagh had carefully marshalled the forces of corruption, and when the division was taken the Government had 138 supporters, while only 96 were on the side of Grattan.<sup>3</sup>

The House adjourned to the 5th of February, and on that day Castlereagh brought his plan of Union definitely before Parliament. Instead of appointing Commissioners, as had been

<sup>1</sup> *Grattan's Life*, v. 76-77.

<sup>2</sup> *Speeches*, pp. 235-46.

<sup>3</sup> Coote, pp. 314-30; *Grattan's Life*, v. 88-91; Barrington, pp. 372-4.



done in the case of the Union with Scotland, he submitted his scheme in the form of articles or resolutions, which were to go through the various stages in both Houses of Parliament, then go through the British Parliament, and when returned be embodied in a Bill.

In introducing his plan, Castlereagh's speech was necessarily long, and in part dry and tedious. There was to be one State, one Parliament, one Church, for it had been agreed on as a fundamental article that the Protestant Church was to be maintained. Taking the imports and exports and the principal articles of consumption for three years, he arrived at the taxable capacity of Ireland for imperial purposes, and fixed it to that of Great Britain as two to fifteen, this to continue for twenty years, when it might be revised in the United Parliament. The debts of the two countries were to be separate, but if at any time they became extinguished, or were brought within the proportions of two to fifteen, they were to be amalgamated. The Imperial Parliament was henceforth to be the taxing authority, but with the proviso that no article in Ireland was to be taxed higher than the same article in Great Britain. Irish revenues were to form a consolidated fund, any surplus remaining, after expenses of government and imperial contribution, to be used in relief of taxation, or for local purposes. The Commercial Articles approximated to those of 1785. The manufactures of each country were to be exported to the other, duty free, though the bounties already paid on Irish linen were to remain, and also those on flour, grain and malt, though only for a period of twenty years. No higher import duty than  $15\frac{1}{2}$  per cent was to be imposed on British manufactures, nor was this to last beyond twenty years; and meanwhile countervailing duties might be imposed in either country on articles subject to internal imposts.

The charges on the re-exportation of native, foreign and colonial goods were to be the same in both countries, and no drawbacks were to be retained on articles exported from either country to the other. The Irish courts of law were to remain untouched. As to the representation of Ireland in the United

Parliament, there were to be in the Upper House 4 spiritual and 28 temporal peers, and in the House of Commons 100 members, 2 for each county, 2 for Trinity College, and 34 for the cities and boroughs. Nomination boroughs were abolished, but their patrons were to be compensated.<sup>1</sup>

With much ingenuity Castlereagh combated the contention of Foster, that the Union would lead to additional taxation; on the contrary, Ireland was making an excellent bargain and taxation would be less. The trading and commercial clauses being so advantageous, he thought himself entitled to the gratitude of Irish manufacturers. Making the permanence of the Protestant Church a fundamental article was meant to attract the support of that Communion, and he knew that many of them were hostile or lukewarm. The lawyers, who feared that the courts would be transferred to London, were glad to see by the arrangement made that their fears were dispelled. The county interest were pleased that the number of county members was to be continued, for they feared a diminution under the Union, and the patrons of the nomination boroughs being so generously compensated could not with any justice complain.

This speech had perhaps some influence on public opinion, but in obtaining votes much more was done by the bribery and corruption which continued to be employed. No less than sixty-three seats had been vacated in the interests of the Union by acceptance of the Escheatorship of Munster.<sup>2</sup> Martial law continued, military officers at the head of their troops paraded the streets of Dublin, and a barrack was erected at Foster Place as if to overawe Parliament itself. Ten thousand of the Irish militia were induced to go to England, and were replaced by an equal number of English militia. Petitions for the Union were sought with avidity,<sup>3</sup> while the Opposition were prevented by force from seeking to petition, and Lords Downshire and Charlemont and Mr. Ponsonby, who issued a circular on behalf of thirty-eight

<sup>1</sup> Coote, pp. 333-63.

<sup>2</sup> *Grattan's Life*, v. 130.

<sup>3</sup> *Castlereagh Correspondence*, iii. 222, 228-9.





county members of Parliament, asking the various counties to convene meetings, were assailed as if they had been guilty of high treason ; and Lord Downshire was dismissed from all the offices he held, and his name erased from the list of the Privy Council.<sup>1</sup> A duelling club was set up among the Unionist members, each of whom was to pick a quarrel with some Opposition member, and so have a chance of shooting him down.<sup>2</sup> The whole patronage of the Government in the Army, the Law, the Church, the Civil Service was unsparingly used for corruption. Everything was offered to the chiefs of the Opposition—to Bushe, Burrowes, Hardy, Saurin and Plunkett ; and Bushe declared that he was staggered at the magnitude of the offers made him.<sup>3</sup> Everywhere the process of bribery went on, and even while the debates in Parliament were proceeding, votes were being bought and sold.

Great efforts were also made by the Opposition. In spite of the Government, meetings were held to petition, and 110,000 signatures were obtained.<sup>4</sup> A fund of £100,000 was raised to purchase votes, and more than one vote was purchased. Burrowes and Saurin and Gould were thus bought, and added much to the debating power of the Opposition.<sup>5</sup> Outside Parliament, Burrowes proposed that an appeal should be issued to the Yeomanry, declaring that no Government would force a measure through against the wishes of 60,000 armed men ;<sup>6</sup> but Grattan and others opposed this motion, which if it had been carried and acted upon might have prevented the Union.<sup>7</sup>

In many speeches the Opposition leaders met effectually the points made by Castlereagh,<sup>8</sup> while Foster in Committee attacked the whole scheme with all his well-known ability, and made a great impression.<sup>9</sup> It was on this occasion that Corry made a coarse and virulent attack on Grattan, calling him an

<sup>1</sup> *Cornwallis*, iii. 170-71 ; *Castlereagh Correspondence*, iii. 241.

<sup>2</sup> Barrington, pp. 358-9 ; *Grattan's Life*, v. 129.

<sup>3</sup> *Grattan's Life*, v. 115.

<sup>4</sup> Lecky, v. 354, notes.

<sup>5</sup> *Grattan's Life*, v. 71-72.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* v. 67-69.

<sup>7</sup> *Cornwallis Correspondence*, iii. 167-8.

<sup>8</sup> Coote, pp. 363-80.

<sup>9</sup> Lecky, pp. 388-95.

"unimpeached traitor." But by this time Grattan had quite recovered his strength, and overwhelmed Corry in a torrent of invective scarcely ever equalled in any Parliament. A duel followed, in which Corry was wounded, and Grattan in consequence became more powerful and more popular than ever.<sup>1</sup>

The position of the Unionists was not improving. Such men as Daly and Fox and Smith and Brown, or even Castlereagh, though able, were much inferior in ability to the Opposition chiefs; as for the rest of the Unionists, they were "mercenaries, soldiers, bravos and bullies."<sup>2</sup> After the duel between Grattan and Corry, they wished for no more duels; some of them attended Parliament irregularly; twelve of them went over to the Opposition,<sup>3</sup> with the result that after all the vacant seats had been filled, the Articles of Union were carried only by 158 to 115, just one more of a majority than that by which Parsons' amendment had been defeated. Cornwallis was despondent; Castlereagh continued bribery, and got ready cash for the purpose from London. But he had no hope of making converts, and only hoped that his followers would keep together.

His hopes were fulfilled. Ponsonby's motion on the 4th of March to send the Anti-Union petition to England was defeated by a majority of 52, Parnell's motion for a dissolution by a majority of 46, and in subsequent divisions, while the majority rarely went beyond 50, it never fell below 40.<sup>4</sup> By the end of March the Union Articles, having passed both Houses, were forwarded to England and passed through the British Parliament with enormous majorities. With some slight alteration in the Church Articles,<sup>5</sup> they came back in May, the Irish Parliament, which had been prorogued for six weeks, again assembled, and the Articles embodied in a Bill rapidly passed the House of Commons and reached the final stages early in June. In these final stages the Opposition relaxed their efforts, feeling that they were

<sup>1</sup> *Grattan's Life*, v. 99-109.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* v. 160.

<sup>3</sup> Lecky, p. 371.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 396-8, 402.

<sup>5</sup> *Castlereagh Correspondence*, iii. 294-5.



fighting a losing battle, but Castlereagh remained to the last at his post.

In the House of Lords, on the contrary, the Opposition at no time was effective, and Lord Clare had an easy task. Once only, on the 10th of February, when first introducing the resolutions, he made a long speech, and then he spoke for four hours. As might have been expected, it was filled with rancour and venom, contained much perverted history, many false statements, much denunciation of the Opposition, whom with great effrontery he foully charged with corruption and sedition; and throughout he manifested a bitter hatred of Grattan, of Catholicity, and of all reform.<sup>1</sup> He had but a feeble opposition to contend with, and the Bill when it subsequently came up from the Commons passed its various stages rapidly. Finally, on the 1st of August, it received the Royal assent.

During the Unionist debates, the case of the Scotch Union was often appealed to, and it was argued that a Union was as necessary for Ireland as for Scotland, and would work equally well. But between the two cases it was points of difference rather than of agreement that could be found. The Scotch asked for Union, the Irish did not, but had it forced on them from England; the Scotch Parliament refused to follow England in her wars, the Irish Parliament never refused; the Scotch Parliament by the Act of Security refused to recognize the Hanoverian succession; the Irish only quarrelled on the question of the Regent, and then only as to the extent of his powers; the Scotch Parliament was elected after having the question specially submitted to the electors; not a whisper of Union was heard in Ireland at the General Election of 1797, and the demands of the Anti-Unionists for a dissolution were rejected; Scotland being poor made a good bargain in matters of trade and taxation and prospered after union; Ireland being then rich made a bad bargain and declined in wealth; finally, the Scotch Union was carried without bribery, if we except about £8000 which was paid in arrears of salaries from the

<sup>1</sup> Coote, pp. 381-411.

English Exchequer, and nothing was paid in respect of her close boroughs ;<sup>1</sup> in Ireland nearly one million and a half was paid the borough-owners and levied off Ireland herself ; and the bribery of members of Parliament was naked and unashamed. And the letters of those engaged in Unionist negotiations—those of Clare and Portland and Wickham and King and Taylor and Littlehales and the Knight of Kerry, and some of Cornwallis's too—were destroyed lest the extent of their infamy should be revealed.<sup>2</sup>

When bribery had been so lavishly used, it is little wonder that the Union passed, especially when we consider that the Irish Parliament had been always corrupt ; that many of its members were placemen and English, caring little for Ireland, but much for the wishes of an English Minister ; and that a large majority of the whole House of Commons were never brought into touch with the people by popular elections, and therefore cared little for popular views. Had the eloquence of the patriot party in the years that followed 1782 been supported by an armed force, there can be little doubt that further concessions would have been made, and that a reformed Parliament with an executive dependent on it would have followed the grant of legislative independence ; and in the dark days of 1800, when the Irish Constitution was subverted, Grattan must have often bitterly reproached himself with having joined those who demanded that the swords of the Volunteers should be laid aside.

Nor was his sweeping condemnation of the Catholic clergy quite just, for though it is certain that if they had unitedly opposed the Union, the Union would not have passed,<sup>3</sup> it is at least probable that a majority of them did not favour the views

<sup>1</sup> Hill Burton's *History of Scotland*, vol. viii. pp. 91, 93-94, 123, 149, 185.

<sup>2</sup> Preface to *Cornwallis Correspondence*. The Report of the Speeches against the Union was burned by the printer, he having been bribed by the Government (*Grattan's Life*, v. 179-80).

<sup>3</sup> *Grattan's Life*, v. 58-59. Twenty-five M.P.'s determined to oppose the Union if Catholics were against it ; but having been assured by Cornwallis that the Catholics favoured it, they withdrew their opposition.



of Dr. Troy. And it was hard to expect that the Catholics—either clerical or lay—would willingly take sides with a virulent bigot such as Mr. Foster. To the last the Anti-Unionists, by not agreeing to be liberal to the Catholics, failed to attract their support, and in consequence failed to make the opposition to the Union a national struggle. One member, Mr. Ogle, declared that he opposed the Union because he feared it would lead to Catholic emancipation.<sup>1</sup> Saurin, a descendant of French Huguenots, seemed to have the Edict of Nantes ever before his eyes,<sup>2</sup> and many others were equally intolerant.

Grattan was on safer ground when he maintained that the Irish Parliament could not vote away its existence, especially without a dissolution having taken place. For the members had not been elected on the question of Union, and they were surely bound on a measure of such magnitude to consult the electors from whom they derived their power. However, the Union passed; a corrupt assembly came to an end; the Great Seal of Great Britain was destroyed and a new one of the Empire took its place; and with the assembling of the United Parliament on the 22nd of January 1801 a new chapter in the chequered history of Ireland was begun.

<sup>1</sup> *Grattan's Life*, v. 95

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* v. 121.

## CHAPTER V

### *The Catholic Question*

PROPHECY was much used on both sides in the Union debates, and when the Union was passed there must have been some anxiety to see which class of prophets would be justified by events. If, as Foster contended, a Union would encourage absentees, ruin important manufactures and increase taxation, it was certainly an evil ; but if, as Castlereagh predicted, it would help the linen and woollen manufactures, lighten taxation and lessen religious animosities, then it was a blessing, the offspring of wisdom and patriotism. Time, however, is necessary to test the value of prophecy, and some years must elapse before a final judgment could be pronounced between the contending prophets. And meantime the engagements entered into by Government should be met.

There was no difficulty about the Act giving compensation to the amount of £1,260,000<sup>1</sup> to the borough-owners. It was passed in the Irish Parliament itself, and by the same means and the same majority as carried the Union ; and compensation was given to the opponents as well as to the supporters of Government. There was more difficulty about the promised peerages and places. While the debates in Parliament were proceeding, Cornwallis had a free hand, and could promise titles in abundance if only he could get Parliamentary support in return. He informed the British Ministry of the engagements he was making, nor did they object. But when the Union was passed, Portland complained of the excessive amount of peerages, and of the difficulty of even obtaining the

<sup>1</sup> *Cornwallis*, iii. 323



King's consent to conferring them, and he more than insinuated that these promises had been recklessly given.<sup>1</sup> With great bitterness Cornwallis complained that he was disgraced before the world in having his engagements repudiated by the Ministry, and he asked to be relieved of his office.<sup>2</sup> Castlereagh was equally pained and equally indignant. If the Viceroy was to be sacrificed after having bought out for the Crown "the fee-simple of Irish corruption," it was sorry treatment, one result of which would be that those disappointed would be sure to publish to the world the profligacy of the means by which the Union had been carried.<sup>3</sup> Ultimately the Ministry gave way, and twenty-two Irish peers were created, five Irish peers received English peerages, and twenty received higher titles.<sup>4</sup>

Those promised pensions and places fared worse than the peers. Cornwallis, on leaving Ireland, had to complain that in many cases his promises as to places and pensions were still unfulfilled. Under the government of his successors the expectants were still expecting their reward, and their unfulfilled claims caused embarrassment to Lord Hardwicke.<sup>5</sup> But some of them remained still expecting until the Tories left office in 1806, and then their claims on the Government were repudiated for ever.<sup>6</sup>

The case of the Catholics was the worst of all. It is true that Pitt's language on the subject in public had been always studiously vague, and that in the House of Commons he refused to give a specific pledge.<sup>7</sup> Nor did Castlereagh in the Irish Parliament, though he avowed it to be the intentions of Government to make some provision for the Catholic clergy, even while he repudiated with indignation the charge of having bribed them to support the Union.<sup>8</sup> Through his whole term of office Cornwallis favoured Emancipation, and with Castlereagh

<sup>1</sup> *Castlereagh Correspondence*, iii. 321-2, 333, 345.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 324-6.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 331-3.

<sup>4</sup> MacNeill, p. 110.

<sup>5</sup> *Colchester's Diary*, i. 321-6 (Hardwicke to Addington).

<sup>6</sup> Lecky, v. 305.

<sup>7</sup> *Castlereagh*, iii. 286.

<sup>8</sup> Speech, Feb. 1800.

had negotiated with the Catholic leaders. Pitt was sanguine that after the Union the Catholics would obtain political rights, and viewed this prospect without alarm; and probably he would have been more decided in his views had not the sinister influence of Lord Clare been brought to bear on him.<sup>1</sup> His whole Cabinet authorized Cornwallis in 1799 to inform the Catholics of their desire for concession, and a positive assurance that a measure of Emancipation would be introduced into the Imperial Parliament would have been given them, but that it was considered just then inexpedient in view of the danger of arousing Protestant prejudice and alienating Protestant support.<sup>2</sup> It was because of this information Catholic support had been obtained for the Union; and when the United Parliament opened its doors in 1801 the expectations of the Catholic body ran high. Great was their disappointment to see that nothing had been said about Emancipation in the King's Speech, and greater still when Pitt, and with him Lords Grenville, Spencer and Camden, as well as Dundas and Wyndham, had resigned their places in the Ministry without anything having been done. Asked for his reasons for this step, Pitt answered in Parliament in language which was guarded but well understood to mean that he and his colleagues had thought that Emancipation was a necessary sequel to the Act of Union and should at once be brought before Parliament by Government; but that as the King was unalterably opposed to their views, they had determined to resign the offices they held, feeling that they could no longer hold office consistently with their duty and their honour.<sup>3</sup> Cornwallis also on Pitt's behalf assured the Irish Catholics that the blame rested on the King, whose hand could not be forced; that they might rely on the friendship and even zeal of the retiring Ministers; that Pitt himself would do his utmost to establish their cause in public favour, and prepare the way for its ultimate success; that to strengthen his hands the Catholics should be patient and loyal, and that by a contrary

<sup>1</sup> Lecky, v. 156-7, 219.

<sup>2</sup> *Castlereagh Correspondence*, iv. 8-12.

<sup>3</sup> *Annual Register*, p. 129.



course of conduct their cause would certainly be imperilled. Cornwallis, who evidently believed Pitt to be sincere, had papers circulated among the Catholic leaders emphasizing the sacrifice which Pitt and his colleagues had made, and pointing out that with such powerful friends on their side the triumph of emancipation could not be long delayed.<sup>1</sup> As for himself, he could not continue to hold office under Pitt's successor, Mr. Addington, who had come into power pledged to resist Emancipation, and he assured the Catholics that neither he nor Pitt would ever again serve the King unless Emancipation was granted.<sup>2</sup> He noted with satisfaction that his advice and exhortations had been well received by Dr. Troy and Lord Fingall,<sup>3</sup> and so informed Lord Castlereagh.

Their faith in Pitt and his promises was more generous and more childlike than that held by the Opposition in Parliament. The latter knew him better; and they believed that his professed friendship for the Catholics was humbug, that he meant nothing, and that after making a mock battle he would return to power and leave them in the lurch.<sup>4</sup> Time proved the correctness of this view. Pitt knew well how deep-seated was the bigotry of George III. He knew that he had been opposed to the concession of 1793; that he had in 1798 directed Cornwallis to be informed of his wish that there should be no indulgence given to the Catholics;<sup>5</sup> that in the following year he objected to any payment of the Catholic clergy;<sup>6</sup> that he had assented to the Union in the hope that it would for ever shut the door to any further measures with respect to the Roman Catholics;<sup>7</sup> and that under the mischievous influence of the English Lord Chancellor Loughborough he had persuaded himself that to admit a few Catholics to Parliament, and to the higher offices, for this is all that was asked, would be to violate his Coronation Oath.<sup>8</sup> Yet Pitt kept the knowledge of these things from Lord Cornwallis, and

<sup>1</sup> *Castlereagh Correspondence*, iv. 34-41.

<sup>2</sup> Plowden, i. 138.

<sup>3</sup> *Castlereagh Correspondence*, iv. 49-50, 72-73.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* 60-61.

<sup>5</sup> Stanhope's *Pitt*, Appendix 16.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* 18.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.* 29.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.* iii. 264-75.

allowed him to indulge Catholic hopes so as to purchase Catholic support. Had he been in earnest he would have privately remonstrated with the King; he would have argued with him and persuaded him; failing this, he would have threatened to resign. And if he had done this, obstinate as the King was, he would have given way. No Government to which Pitt was opposed could have lived, and this the King knew well. He was indeed tenacious as any Englishman could be; he was cunning and could read the signs of the times; but his intellect was of a common order, and little fitted to cope with the mighty intellect of his great Minister, and in a contest between the two the royal will must have been overborne in the clash of contending wills.

The real reason why Pitt resigned was that the nation, sick of a war which had more than doubled the National Debt,<sup>1</sup> and had only aggrandized France, wanted peace, and Pitt was too proud to make terms with Bonaparte. As for Emancipation he cared nothing. With his full assent, his personal friend Addington became Prime Minister—a man with the same character of intellect as the King and just as bigoted. Instead of opposing, Pitt supported Addington's measures; he never raised a finger to help the Catholics, nor uttered a word to give them hope;<sup>2</sup> and when the peace with France, which came with the Treaty of Amiens, was broken and the terrible struggle was renewed, he brushed Addington aside with contempt and assumed the reins of power. In 1801 George III. had one of his intermittent fits of insanity, and when he recovered blamed Pitt and the Catholics for his illness; and now (1804) Pitt returned to power, pledged never again to raise the Catholic question, whether in or out of office, during the lifetime of the King. Assuredly those were right who said he was only deceiving the Catholics, and that he would return to power leaving them in the lurch. But the Catholics, it might be said, had their revenge, for Pitt's days were numbered, and those days were wrapped in gloom. His subserviency to the King's prejudices lost him the

<sup>1</sup> Plowden, i. 6.

<sup>2</sup> Ashbourne's *Pitt*, p. 305.



support of such able men as Fox and Grenville, and left him with colleagues unequal to the great offices they filled. His friend Lord Melville, the Dundas of earlier days, on the shameful charge of appropriating public moneys, had been deprived of all his offices, struck off the Privy Council, and impeached. His great antagonist Bonaparte, with far greater power than was ever wielded by Charlemagne, had become Napoleon, Emperor of the French. The victories of Lake and Wellesley in India, and still more the brilliant victory of Trafalgar, were certainly events of which both the nation and Minister might be proud. But, on the other hand, all the efforts of both nation and Minister against France had failed; the capitulation of Ulm and the victory of Austerlitz made Napoleon master of Continental Europe, and amid the smoke of battle and the blaze of victory Pitt's coalitions and combinations vanished like a dream. The great Minister died broken-hearted in January 1806, little regretted by large masses of Englishmen, but regretted least of all by the Irish Catholics, whom he had shamefully betrayed.

During this period Irish Chief Secretaries succeeded each other in rapid succession. Mr. Abbott succeeded Lord Castle-reagh in 1801. Mr. Wickham held the office from the beginning of 1802 to the end of 1803; Mr. Evan Nepean to the beginning of 1805; and Mr. Vansittart from the latter date to the death of Pitt; but none of these gentlemen did anything remarkable, or indeed was capable of doing such. During the whole period Lord Hardwicke was Viceroy—an honourable English Protestant but no bigot, suave, courteous, conciliatory, the tool of no party in Ireland, and the same to all. Under his rule the guilty were punished, the peaceful protected, Orange intolerance was discouraged, and with such good results that Ireland was at peace. One of his greatest troubles was in respect to the Union engagements. Day after day he was pestered with demands for places in the Civil Service, for pensions, for promotions in the Army places on the bench, preferments in the Church;<sup>1</sup> and the applicants

<sup>1</sup> *Viceroy's Post-Bag*, pp. 45-54.

were sometimes so persistent that we find him—apparently almost in despair—writing on the repeated application of Mr. James Knox: “The Lord deliver me from Mr. James Knox, Ranger of Kildare!”<sup>1</sup>

From Lord Clare also he got annoyance, but it did not last for long, for the stormy career of that headstrong politician was drawing rapidly to its close. Accustomed to dominate everything in Irish Government, he complained bitterly that Cornwallis and Castlereagh had negotiated with the Catholics behind his back,<sup>2</sup> and he despised both Hardwicke and Abbot, and to both was insolent and overbearing. To the last he hated Ireland and Catholicity. In the British House of Lords, in 1801, he attacked his countrymen with savage severity; defended the horrors of 1798 in their entirety; advocated perpetual martial law; told the assembled Peers that one of his own servants had been recently murdered, and for no reason but that he was English; that his house was an armoury, and that his servant brought him his arms as regularly as he brought him his hat; that not one Irishman in a hundred cared a jot for Emancipation, but they wanted the abolition of tithes, and every small farmer expected ten acres of land.<sup>3</sup> This series of wanton and wicked falsehoods he uttered for the evident purpose of rousing Anti-Catholic prejudices; but he uttered them to the disgust of the Assembly in which he spoke; and his language must surely have been violent and his conduct vile, when Pitt, who was listening, turned to his friend Wilberforce with the remark, “Good God, did you ever hear so great a rascal!”<sup>4</sup> Returning to Ireland, he died at his Dublin residence in January 1802. A Dublin mob is not usually ungenerous, and insults to the dead are rare among them. Yet such was the execration in which Clare was held that crowds gathered round his house in Ely Place and groaned and hooted as he lay dead.<sup>5</sup> At his funeral there was a con-

<sup>1</sup> *Post-Bag*, p. 219.

<sup>2</sup> *Castlereagh Correspondence*, iv. 50-51.

<sup>3</sup> *Annual Register*, pp. 153-79.

<sup>4</sup> *Grattan's Life*, iii. 403.

<sup>5</sup> *Cloncurry's Recollections*, p. 146.



tinuation of these scenes. The dead Chancellor had once declared that he would make the Irish as tame as cats, and remembering this at the grave-side, the crowd poured a shower of dead cats on his coffin. Thus passed Lord Clare. The Government were delighted, and Mr. Abbott gave expression to their relief.<sup>1</sup> The people exulted that the tyrant was no more, and even now, a century after his death, perhaps no Irishman's name is so execrated in Ireland as that of John Fitzgibbon, Lord Clare.<sup>2</sup>

Another and very different man who disturbed the repose of the Government was Robert Emmet. He was the youngest brother of Thomas Addis Emmet, who played so prominent a part in the rebellion of 1798, and who, in 1801, after an imprisonment of three years, had been released from Fort George. For his connexion with the United Irishmen, Robert, then in his twentieth year, had been expelled from Trinity College. He was sent on a mission to France by what remained of the United Irish Executive; but the Peace of Amiens cut off hope of French assistance, and Robert, returning to Ireland, devoted his time and talents to the business of tanning. His tastes were ill suited to such business, and when his father died in 1803, leaving him a sum of £3000, he resolved to overturn the British Government in Ireland and set up an Irish republic. He was a poet and a singularly gifted orator, and poets and orators make bad conspirators, and yet in the secrecy with which he worked and outwitted the Government he equalled the most seasoned conspirator. Quigley, a bricklayer, Stafford, a baker, Michael Dwyer, who still maintained a desultory warfare among the Wicklow Hills—these were his trusted advisers in Dublin; while Thomas Russell, the friend of Wolfe Tone, looked after the counties of Antrim and Down.

To collect arms and manufacture explosives two depôts were set up in Dublin, one in Patrick Street, the other in Marshalsea Lane, off Thomas Street. Emmet himself, who never visited these depôts and was unknown to the workmen

<sup>1</sup> *Colchester's Diary*, i. 278-9.

<sup>2</sup> *Sham Squire*, pp. 196-7.

employed there, supplied the money to Stafford and Quigley, and these paid the rent of the depôts and the wages of those employed.

Kildare and Dublin were partially organized, and Dwyer attended to Wicklow; and Emmet's plan was to gather together on a certain day the men of Dublin, Kildare and Wicklow, distribute the arms collected, then with a rush capture Dublin Castle, and the rest was easy.

An explosion at the Patrick Street depôt killed one of the workmen, and led to the partial disclosure of the conspiracy and the seizure of the stores contained there. It also put the authorities on their guard, and caused Emmet to hasten the opening of the insurrection. Henceforth he lived at the Marshalsea Lane depôt himself, and fixed nine o'clock in the evening of the 23rd of July for the rising. He had about 3000 pikes, 12 cases of pistols, 4 muskets, 18 blunderbusses and some ill-constructed combustibles. Emmet himself had a sword and a uniform of green and gold.

Early on the 23rd of July some of the Kildare men came to the city; but when they saw their youthful leader and the scanty stores they turned home, and warned their fellow-countrymen whom they met to do the same. The Wicklow men failed to co-operate; in Down and Antrim Russell could do nothing; and when Emmet sallied forth from Marshalsea Lane on the evening of the 23rd of July he had little more than a hundred men. His followers disregarded his advice to proceed to Wicklow and join Dwyer, and Emmet, joined by Quigley and Stafford, returned to Emmet's lodgings at Rathfarnham.

Meantime, as the shades of night fell, his divided followers put an officer and a soldier to death, and brutally murdered the Chief Justice, Lord Kilwarden. But they were soon scattered by the military, with the loss of thirty killed and several taken prisoners.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Post-Bag*, pp. 269-99; Madden, iii. 317, 349-50; O'Donoghue's *Life of Robert Emmet*, pp. 92-121; *Byrne's Memoirs*, i. 300-301. Byrne highly extols Emmet's plans, and this when Byrne had acquired considerable experience of military affairs.



In what happened subsequently to Emmet tragedy and romance are intermingled. His residence at Rathfarnham was searched by yeomen, who stabbed his servant Anne Devlin with their bayonets, and then half-hanged her in order to extort information; but the heroic girl refused to tell what she knew.<sup>1</sup> In reality Emmet had gone to the Wicklow Mountains, and had he stayed there, might have baffled the Government and escaped from the country. Near Rathfarnham, however, lived one whom he loved as devotedly as he loved Ireland. This was Sarah, a younger daughter of John Philpot Curran. To see her Emmet returned to Harold's Cross, and there he was arrested by Major Sirr and lodged in Kilmainham Jail till his trial on the 19th of September.

He was defended by MacNally, who promptly told the Government everything he learned from his client.<sup>2</sup> He was assailed with violence and venom by Plunkett, who prosecuted for the Crown.<sup>3</sup> But Emmet knew well that no attack could then injure him, and no advocacy save him from his doom. In fact, he called no witnesses, nor allowed his counsel to make a speech; but when asked before sentence by the presiding Judge, Lord Norbury, if he had anything to say, he spoke himself, and with an eloquence which astonished all. His only request was that no one should write his epitaph until his country had effectually broken her chains; his only anxiety was for his friends, and above all for Sarah Curran and for the anguish he knew she would endure. For himself he cared nothing. In the letter he wrote on the night before his execution there is no tremor in the writing, no incoherence in the thoughts; and on the following day he mounted the scaffold with a firm step. He was executed in front of St. Catherine's Church in Thomas Street, first hanged and then his head cut off and held up to the crowd as the head of a traitor.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Post-Bag*, pp. 331, 453; O'Donoghue, pp. 139-44.

<sup>2</sup> *Post-Bag*, pp. 401-3, 442.

<sup>3</sup> *Plunkett's Speeches*, pp. 85-96.

<sup>4</sup> *Post-Bag*, pp. 399-412; O'Donoghue, pp. 179-81.

Russell was soon after arrested and executed ; Quigley and Stafford were pardoned ; Michael Dwyer surrendered and was banished to New South Wales.<sup>1</sup> Rebellion in Ireland had spent itself ; the United Irish Society decayed and died ; and the people, weary of blood, turned to other and more peaceful ways for the redress of its wrongs.

At no time had Emmet's plan any chance of even partial success. The people were certainly discontented, but their spirits were cowed ; the atrocities of 1798 were still fresh in their memories ; and they shrank with horror from anything which would again let loose a licentious soldiery armed with all the powers of martial law. The landing of a great French army would, no doubt, have attracted thousands of the peasantry ; but this prospect was in the highest degree improbable, for the war in Europe had already shown, and was destined to show still more in the future, that if Napoleon was master on the land, England was no less the ruler of the sea. Prudence and foresight would have taken these things into account before recklessly embarking in rebellion. But Emmet was young and ardent ; his enthusiasm ignored stern realities ; where experience and age would have paused he rushed heedlessly on, only to find that his visions were unsubstantial and his hopes were but boyish dreams. And yet, though he failed and did harm instead of good, he is the idol of his race. No story in Irish history is better known than that of Emmet and Sarah Curran : the story of how the latter was sad amid surroundings that were gay ; of how she pined and drooped like a lily on its stalk, in a foreign and sunny land, and then came back to Ireland to die. The Irish maiden still mourns her lot, and with moistened eyes still sings those wailing notes which have been wedded to words by the genius of Moore. With millions of Irishmen Emmet's speech from the dock has been the gospel of Irish nationality. It has been quoted from platforms and declaimed from the stage ; it has furnished texts for speeches from the desk ; it has consoled

<sup>1</sup> *Post-Bag*, pp. 421-41.



men in their prison cells ; it has filled their thoughts as they mounted the scaffold. On the whitewashed walls of every Irish peasant's home, beside the pictures of the Pope and of O'Connell, there is another that is familiar to us all. It is that of Emmet in his white trousers and vest, his Hessian boots, his coat of green and gold, his military cloak, his cocked hat in his hand, his face spiritualized by enthusiasm, his eyes filled with the light which has never shone upon land or sea. Wherever the Irish race has gone it is the same, and abroad or at home the name of Emmet is one with which to conjure. And if a time should ever come — and who can foresee the destinies of nations?—when Ireland would emerge into the full light of freedom, from the ends of the earth a scattered race would send its help to erect that monument which is still unthought of and to write that epitaph which is still unwritten.

By the meaner spirits among the Protestants an attempt was made to connect the Catholics with the Rebellion. But the attempt failed. The Catholics were certainly disgusted that so far nothing had been done for them, and that instead of granting concessions the British Parliament had continually suspended the Habeas Corpus Act, and in 1801 had put the country under martial law. And they were irritated in 1803 by the conduct of the Lord Chancellor, Redesdale, who in appointing Lord Fingal a magistrate took occasion to animadvert severely on the Catholics, and to declare that their clergy taught neither loyalty nor charity.<sup>1</sup> A nobleman of stainless character and ancient name might and ought to have vigorously replied to this newly-promoted lawyer, whose letters—for there were several—were a curious compound of bigotry and insolence. But Fingal meekly accepted the rebuke administered to his religion, and he and others after Emmet's insurrection hastened to present an address of loyalty to the Viceroy.

In 1805 he and others for the first time for years bestirred themselves and prepared a petition to Parliament, which they

<sup>1</sup> *Annual Register*, pp. 575-84.

first took to Pitt. To their surprise that Minister refused to support it, and told them he would even oppose it, as in fact he did, when it was presented by Lord Grenville in the Lords and by Fox in the Commons. Grenville was beaten by nearly four to one; Fox by 336 to 124. On this occasion Grattan made his first appearance in the Imperial Parliament. Till then he had obstinately resisted all solicitations to enter that assembly, and only in 1805, under the strongest pressure and in the hope that he might be useful to the Catholics, did he give way. He was returned for Lord Fitzwilliam's close borough of Malden in Yorkshire, and on Fox's motion fully maintained his great reputation, placing himself at once among the greatest orators in Parliament. If argument and eloquence could have prevailed, his speech, and those of Fox and Wyndham, should have carried the day; but the opposition of Pitt was fatal, and the motion was lost.<sup>1</sup>

The next year the prospects for the Catholics brightened. Pitt died; Grenville became Prime Minister, with Fox and Wyndham as his lieutenants, Fox indeed being the real Master of the Ministry of all the Talents, as it was called; the Duke of Bedford became Irish Viceroy; and George Ponsonby succeeded Redesdale as Lord Chancellor.<sup>2</sup> But the bright prospects that had opened were soon darkened by the death of Fox in September.<sup>3</sup> The blow weakened the Ministry; the King's bigotry, which had slept for a time, again became active and aggressive; and when the Ministers introduced a small measure into Parliament, simply assimilating the law in England to that of Ireland, and so enabling Catholics to get commissions in the Army, the King not only demanded that the measure should be at once dropped, but further that Ministers should pledge themselves against all concessions to Catholics. They dropped the measure, but indignantly refused to give pledges for the future, and the irate monarch dismissed

<sup>1</sup> *Annual Register*, pp. 89-97; Plowden, ii. 44-56, 81-156. On this occasion Pitt laid special stress on the fact that he had never given any specific pledge to support emancipation.

<sup>2</sup> Plowden, ii. 274-83.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 402-3.



them from office with as little ceremony as a farmer might dismiss his ploughboy.<sup>1</sup>

The Duke of Portland became Premier, with Percival Chancellor of the Exchequer and leader of the House of Commons; the Parliament, which was but four months old, was dissolved; and members going to the country with the cry of the Church in danger, were returned to power with an enormous majority. To the regret of all Catholic Ireland, Bedford ceased to be Viceroy and was replaced by the Duke of Richmond.<sup>2</sup> Sir Arthur Wellesley became Chief Secretary, Lord Manners succeeded Ponsonby as Lord Chancellor, while Saurin, a violent Anti-Catholic, replaced Plunkett as Attorney-General. Percival's Ministry was often called the No-Popery Ministry, and so well was it known as being Anti-Catholic that in 1807, under advice from Grattan, the Catholics presented no petition to Parliament.<sup>3</sup>

In 1806 a secret society called the Threshers made its appearance in Connaught. Like the Whiteboys, the members often dressed themselves in white shirts and made night attacks; but they appeared in the daytime as well, their special object of attack being the tithe-proctors.<sup>4</sup> A rigorous administration of the ordinary law would have been quite sufficient to put them down; but the Government wanted exceptional power, and in 1807 an Insurrection Act and an Arms Act were passed. Though Sheridan opposed these measures, Grattan voted for them, to the surprise of many in Ireland.<sup>5</sup> Yet the Catholics entrusted their petitions to him in 1808, and in Parliament he was powerfully supported by Ponsonby, now the leader of the Opposition, since Lord Hardwicke had gone to the Lords as Earl Grey. To induce the Ministry to yield, both these Irishmen, with the authority of the Irish Catholics, proposed to give the King a veto on the appointment of Catholic Bishops. Lord Fingal, the delegate sent to London from the Catholic body, certainly so instructed

<sup>1</sup> Plowden, ii. 500-501; *Annual Register*, p. 136.

<sup>2</sup> Plowden, ii. 542, iii. 645.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* ii. 521-38.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* iii. 405-8.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* 563-86.

Grattan, as did Dr. Milner, an English Bishop, who on many occasions acted as agent of the Irish Catholic Bishops. But there was misunderstanding somewhere. Fingal had distinctly exceeded his instructions in making any such proposal, and Dr. Milner did not represent the Irish Bishops, who, when they met in Dublin, declared by 23 to 3 votes that they wanted no change in the existing mode of appointing to the Episcopacy.<sup>1</sup> But whether the Catholics would agree to the Veto or not, the Government would give them nothing. Grattan and Ponsonby were defeated by 281 to 128 votes;<sup>2</sup> Mr. Parnell's motions for a commutation of tithes in 1809 and 1810 were defeated by large majorities also; and in the latter year Grattan was defeated by 213 to 109 votes when he presented the Catholic petition.<sup>3</sup>

Such progress was slow, nor would it be otherwise until among the Catholic Committee both men and methods were changed. During the Rebellion and the years following the Union that body had not met at all. And when it was revived in 1805 its existence was languid, its meetings irregular, its activity confined to preparing petitions. Its leading members, Lords Gormanstown and Trimleston, were out of touch with the people; Fingal had courage though he had shown little spirit in his correspondence with Lord Redesdale; neither Lord French nor Mr. Hussey was a man of ability; Mr. Scully was a clever lawyer and nothing more; Mr. Clinch was learned but impractical; Dromgoole was a Catholic bigot and ill suited to win Protestant support. As for Keogh, whose services were so valuable in the past, he was old and not easily managed.<sup>4</sup> These leaders for the most part stood in constant dread of provoking the wrath of the Government and were timid; there were jealousies and divisions among them; and the question of the Veto still further divided them, for while Fingal and some of his friends favoured it, the Bishops, backed up by the whole weight of Catholic opinion, opposed it.<sup>5</sup> To

<sup>1</sup> Plowden, iii. 644-77, 696-700, 810-25.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 657.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 729-32, 827-58.

<sup>4</sup> Wyse, i. 136-64.

<sup>5</sup> Wyse, i. 171; Plowden, iii. 677-95, 833-75.



meet in Dublin from time to time, to make professions of loyalty to the King, to prepare petitions and present them to Parliament was nothing better than ploughing the sands. These weapons had become rusty and useless. It was necessary that the masses and not merely the classes should act ; that there should be more vigour and determination ; that the united Catholic body should demand concessions, not as a favour but as a right. And the history of the British Parliament in its treatment of Ireland has been, that it is only when the country is fiercely agitated as the sea is in a storm, when it utters the language of menace and speaks with the voice of the whirlwind, only then are concessions given.

To do these things a leader, above all, was necessary, and the leader appeared in the person of Daniel O'Connell. Born of an old Catholic family in Kerry in 1775, he was educated at St. Omer in France, studied law in London and Dublin, and was called to the Irish Bar in 1800. When quite young he wrote in his *Journal*<sup>1</sup> that he would steadily attach himself to the interests of Ireland ; and that he believed moderation to be the true character of patriotism. In France he had seen the horrors of the Revolution ; in Ireland the horrors of 1798 ; and during his whole life he abhorred both revolution and rebellion, as he did the shedding of blood. No man felt more keenly the treatment of his co-religionists, but he believed their rights could be won by agitation ; and he had all the qualities that go to make a successful agitator. His frame was that of Hercules ; he was capable of extreme bodily and mental exertion ; he spoke Irish and English with equal fluency, and could therefore reach the masses of the people. A great orator and debater, he was a master of sarcasm and invective, and in Parliament it was woe to the member who attacked himself or his country. A great lawyer, and always on the popular side, he was the terror of Crown lawyers and Crown witnesses, and the partisan judge on the bench shrank from an encounter with him.

But it was on an Irish hillside, in presence of an immense crowd, that he was at his best. He knew the people as the

<sup>1</sup> Houston's *O'Connell's Early Life and Journal*, pp. 193, 202.

great musician knows his instrument, and could play on their feelings with equal skill. His voice rang out clearly as a bell, and as he spoke his audience laughed or wept, grew sad or gay, raised their heads high with pride when he told them they were the finest peasantry in the world, or muttered curses against the Government when he recounted its evil deeds. Though of undaunted courage, he had no sympathy with violence or crime ; cautiously picked his way amid Acts of Parliament, and evaded them as few men could, and made the people in unity and organization feel their strength and respect themselves ; and while feeling loyalty to the reigning sovereign, had neither loyalty nor respect for a Minister unfriendly to Ireland. It was he who described Percival's Ministry as taken from the dregs of every party,<sup>1</sup> and it was he who sent out the circular in 1810 inviting the people in every district to meet and form local committees in correspondence with the Catholic Committee in Dublin.<sup>2</sup>

The Government were not slow to recognize the new spirit which had arisen, and under the Convention Act of 1793 had all such meetings proclaimed.<sup>3</sup> But the magistrates through the country refused to carry out the proclamation,<sup>4</sup> and the Committee in Dublin met as usual. Fingal and some others were arrested ; but Dr. Sheridan, who was the first of them put on trial, was acquitted. The Government was crestfallen and the Catholics elated, but the Catholic Committee in Dublin insisted that Dr. Sheridan's colleagues should also be tried, and this was done in 1812, with the unlooked-for result that Mr. Kirwan, the person then tried, was found guilty, and thus did the defeat of 1812 neutralize the victory of the preceding year.<sup>5</sup>

This was discouraging, but in other things which happened there were elements of hope. O'Connell turned the Catholic Committee into the Catholic Board, and thus evaded the Government proclamation. In 1811 George III. became permanently insane, and henceforth was unable to influence

<sup>1</sup> Plowden, ii. 533-4.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* iii. 881-7.

<sup>3</sup> Wyse, Appendix xii.

<sup>4</sup> Burrowes, pp. 76-77.

<sup>5</sup> *Memoirs and Speeches of Peter Burrowes*, pp. 213-85.



measures or men ; and his son, the Regent, was looked on as a friend to the Catholics. In 1812 Mr. Percival was shot dead in the House of Commons, and Lord Liverpool, who became Premier, though opposed to Emancipation himself, left his colleagues free to vote as they pleased. The four greatest living statesmen in England, Lords Grenville, Grey, and Wellesley and Mr. Canning, refused to take office unless the Catholic claims were conceded.<sup>1</sup> Finally, in the same year (1812), Canning was able to carry a resolution that the laws relating to Catholics should be considered, and in the next year Grattan, supported by Canning and Castlereagh, and with wonderful eloquence by Plunkett, carried a Catholic Relief Bill through its second reading. In committee it was defeated by four votes on an amendment excluding Catholics from Parliament, the amendment having been moved by Abbott, the Speaker, a former Chief Secretary, and always a venomous bigot, and it was moved at the suggestion, or at least with the approval, of the Regent.<sup>2</sup>

Nor was this the only check Emancipation received. In 1812 a new Chief Secretary came to Ireland, Mr. Robert (afterwards Sir Robert) Peel. He was then but twenty-four years of age, of brilliant talents and great determination, but narrow-minded and illiberal, the friend and champion of the Orangemen.<sup>3</sup> In 1814 he suppressed the Catholic Board and attacked O'Connell. O'Connell retorted by calling him Orange Peel, and managed by various shifts to continue the agitation for Catholic rights. The two men became and continued bitter personal enemies. O'Connell still kept agitating. Peel had savage Coercion Acts savagely enforced, and to strengthen the hands of the Central Government he formed a police force independent of the local magistrates, and dependent only on the Executive at Dublin. In 1817 he voluntarily resigned office. It was said he was disgusted with Ireland, and it is certain that Ireland was disgusted with him.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Shaw-Lefevre, *Peel and O'Connell*, p. 35.

<sup>2</sup> *Colchester's Diary*, vol. ii.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* ii. 468-73.

<sup>4</sup> Shaw-Lefevre, pp. 36-37, 46-47.

But even worse than Peel was the revival of the Veto agitation, a question long destined to divide and weaken the Catholics. Grattan's Bill of 1813 had been supported by Canning and Castlereagh, but only because he conceded the Veto. In the next year the Bill was approved of by the Prefect of the propaganda, Cardinal Quarantotti.<sup>1</sup> Pius VII. was then a prisoner of Napoleon, and extraordinary facilities had been given the Cardinal, which he was not slow to use; nor did the Pope, on his return to Rome in 1815, repudiate but approve of the rescript in which Quarantotti had made known his wish to the Irish Bishops. Dr. Troy was pleased, for the rescript had been obtained through the intrigues of himself and the English Catholics. But the other Irish Bishops, who had already opposed the Veto, believing it would be ruinous to the best interests of the Church, were in a cruel difficulty. Their respect for the Pope imposed on them the duty of remaining silent. But O'Connell and the laity spoke out, and if we exclude Lord Fingal and a few high-placed Catholics, he had the whole Catholic people at his back. Plunkett was praised because he refused to concede the Veto in 1813, Grattan assailed because he had conceded it; and when the Catholics' petition of 1815 was to be presented it was no longer entrusted to Grattan but to Parnell. On the part of the Vetoists, however, Grattan presented petitions in 1816, 1817 and again in 1819, and in the latter year, in a House of nearly 500, he was beaten by only two votes.<sup>2</sup>

The next year Grattan died. He became ill in Ireland, and had he taken the advice of his friends he would have remained in Ireland and died there. But he insisted on crossing to England to present the Catholic petition. His strength, however, failed him, and he died in London in June. He had expressed the wish to be buried in his own land, but as the end approached an offer was accepted of a grave in Westminster Abbey, and there he was interred. He lies near Pitt and Fox and Canning, their contests over in the

<sup>1</sup> Wyse, Appendix ix.

<sup>2</sup> *Grattan's Speeches*, pp. 407-12, 416, 431.



silence of the tomb ; and no one who remembers that their voices often shook the senate and decided the fate of nations will deny that he rests among the mighty dead. And yet every Irishman who stands over his grave feels with a pang that the great patriot is not amongst his own, but amongst strangers. All around are stately monuments which art has fashioned to perpetuate the features of England's great men, and on which eloquence has recounted their deeds. But the tomb of Grattan, obscurely placed, is only a plain flagstone inscribed with the name Henry Grattan—this and nothing more. Worst of all, Grattan lies at the feet of Castlereagh. In death it is surely right that enmities should cease, and on the same field the dust of the conqueror and the conquered are intermingled. And yet it would be a happier arrangement if the founder of Ireland's constitution and its destroyer were placed apart. No Irishman is more respected than Grattan, no one passed through corrupt times with cleaner hands ; his stainless character even calumny has been powerless to assail. But no Irishman is more execrated than Castlereagh, no one was more shamefully corrupt ; even the lapse of time has failed to throw the pall of oblivion over his infamy. Nevertheless, as if to recall ancient feuds and reawaken bitter memories, the traitor and the patriot have been placed in the closest proximity ; the tomb of Grattan a plain flagstone, while Castlereagh, placed high on his marble pedestal, his proud features chiselled by art, his virtues pompously recounted, looks down upon his rival with mocking triumph.

It was a melancholy satisfaction to Grattan at the close of his career that of the prophecies made by the supporters of the Union in 1800 not one had been fulfilled. After twenty years nothing had been done for a commutation of tithes, nothing to give Catholics the rights of citizens. Instead of religious animosities having been extinguished, they were still active ; nor was the bigotry of Clare and Foster more offensive or more aggressive than that of Abbot and Redesdale and Peel. The discontent which had taken shape in the association of the Threshers, for a time suppressed, had reappeared about

1820 in a more dangerous form, when the secret society of the Ribbonmen came into existence. Nor could the British Parliament, which was said to be so just, find any better remedy for allaying discontent than to pass a series of Coercion Acts, which came year after year as regularly as the seasons. Irish manufactures, which were to prosper, had decayed instead; taxes that were to be diminished had increased; the national revenue was unequal to the national expenditure; the National Debt, which in 1800 was but £18,000,000, was £43,000,000 in 1804,<sup>1</sup> and in 1817 had so increased that the necessary proportion (two to fifteen) to the British Debt was reached and both debts were amalgamated. Protestants as well as Catholics were so dissatisfied that as early as 1810 a meeting of Dublin citizens demanded a repeal of the Union, and the Dublin Grand Jury resolved that "The Act of Union, after ten years' operation, instead of augmenting the comforts, prosperity and happiness of the people, agreeably to the hopes held out by the advocates of that measure, had produced an accumulation of distress; and instead of cementing, they feared that, if not repealed, it might endanger the connexion between the sister islands."<sup>2</sup> Nor was it much consolation to know that all the principal instruments in passing the Act of Union had fared badly. It was, however, true. Clare had died with a howling mob at his windows, and dead cats had been thrown on his coffin. Pitt died when his arch-enemy Napoleon had just humbled Austria and Russia and spoiled all his plans. George III. for the last nine years of his life was a hopeless lunatic. Lastly, Castlereagh, who had become one of the most unpopular men in England, ended his days in 1822 by cutting his throat; and an angry and menacing crowd hooted and hissed as his body was borne to Westminster Abbey.

In the meantime the Catholics for a brief period in the previous year were filled with hope. In 1820 George III. died, and his son and successor, George IV., came to Ireland

<sup>1</sup> *Grattan's Life*, v. 370-71; Plowden, ii. 9-10.

<sup>2</sup> *Grattan's Life*, v. 419; Plowden, iii. 897.



in the next year. The Irish are a courteous and hospitable people, and a King of England—the first to come for four centuries, and who came with every profession of goodwill—was sure to be welcome. But further, had he not been the special friend of Fox and Sheridan and Grattan, and the special enemy of Pitt? and this alone placed him high in the affections of Irishmen. They rushed with open arms to receive him; the port at which he landed had its name changed from Dunleary to Kingstown; Protestant and Catholic joined together and vied with each other in doing him honour, and as for O'Connell nothing could exceed his enthusiastic loyalty. In leaving the country His Majesty protested his affection for a people of such warm and generous hearts; and he counselled all to avoid causes of irritation and to live in mutual forbearance and goodwill.<sup>1</sup> But he gave no hint that the promises of 1800 would be redeemed, no rebuke to Protestant ascendancy, no message of hope to the afflicted Catholics. Nor indeed could any such message be expected from such a king. It is doubtful if a more degraded character ever sat upon the English throne. To him truth and honour were but empty names. Faithful to no promise and to no friend, he deserted his life-long friends the Whigs because he believed the Tories would be more indulgent to his crimes. A bad son, he vowed that his public conduct as Regent would be governed by filial duty and affection.<sup>2</sup> Without any respect for religion, he opposed Emancipation with bitterness. Marrying beneath him, he publicly denied his marriage, and then went back to the woman who loved him, with new protestations of affection. By ill-treatment he drove his Queen from his house, and then charged her—and not unjustly, it appears—with immoral conduct, while he himself lived in open adultery with his mistress. The worn-out profligate came to Ireland for fresh scenes of riot and debauchery, of gluttony and drunkenness; he came, says Byron, with a legion of cooks and an army of slaves; he cared as little for Ireland as for Timbuctoo, and the Irish people who cheered him and flattered him only earned the contempt of all

<sup>1</sup> Wyse, Appendix xiii.

<sup>2</sup> *Colchester's Diary*, ii. 316-17.

men, and proved that if their condition was one of slavery, they themselves had contracted the vices of slaves.

Two years after this date O'Connell dined at a friend's house in Wicklow (Glencullen, the residence of Mr. O'Mara)<sup>1</sup> with a young Catholic lawyer named Richard Lalor Sheil. Sheil favoured the Veto. The two gentlemen spoke much of the condition of their country, and sought a remedy for its ills. The Catholic Committee which promised much had done but little, nor had the Catholic Board. The fact was that neither had been sufficiently in touch with the masses, and perished for want of popular support. Their dissolution had been hastened by the coercive measures of Peel, which appear to have intimidated even O'Connell. The unfortunate question of the Veto by dividing the Catholics still further weakened them, and rendered them impotent for a renewed effort. But if Catholic rights were ever to be won inactivity would not do. Nor could any fresh organization accomplish anything which, composed only of peers and lawyers, confined itself to preparing petitions to Parliament.

Taught by experience, O'Connell was convinced that it was necessary to reach the people, the clergy, the professional men, the shopkeeper, the farmer, the labourer. They must assemble together and discuss their wrongs, and they must expose the intolerance of the Orangemen, the extortions of the State Church, the insolence and brutality of the squireens, the iniquities of the Courts of Justice.

Nor was the time selected for the Catholics to bestir themselves unpropitious. The Viceroy, Lord Wellesley, as the constant friend of emancipation, had so incurred the ire of the Orangemen that they attacked him in a Dublin theatre and hurled a bottle at the Viceregal box. An Orange jury refused to convict the rioters, and in consequence the Viceroy's love for the Orangemen did not increase, nor his desire to harass the Catholics as the Orangemen wished.

In 1821 Plunkett, aided by Canning, carried a Catholic Relief Bill in the House of Commons. It was thrown out by

<sup>1</sup> M'Donagh's *O'Connell*, pp. 124-5.



the Lords, and to put down some disturbances in Ireland Coercion Acts were passed then and in the following year. However, Wellesley was continued as Viceroy and Plunkett replaced the bigot Saurin as Attorney-General, and when Castlereagh died his place was filled by Canning. Lastly, the question of the Veto ceased to be agitated, for the Papal Court ceased to urge it, seeing on the one hand that it had not induced Parliament to concede anything, and on the other that the Irish people would not have their bishops appointed by a Protestant Government. Dr. Troy also died in 1823, and not one of his surviving colleagues sympathized fully with his peculiar views on public questions. And lately there had been added to their number the brilliant Dr. Doyle of Kildare, who courageously spoke out denouncing in scathing terms the Government of Ireland, and demanding that her wrongs should be redressed.<sup>1</sup>

This was the state of things when O'Connell and Sheil founded the Catholic Association in 1823. The object was declared to be emancipation "by legal and constitutional means," and to evade the Convention Act it assumed no delegated or representative character. It was merely a club, holding its meetings once a week, open to the press, its members paying a yearly subscription of one guinea. Its progress was slow, and sometimes there was a difficulty in getting together the necessary ten members to form a quorum.<sup>2</sup> But with O'Connell at its head working with tireless energy it made headway. Before two years had elapsed it had peers and bishops (Dr. Doyle and Murray) and hundreds of clergy in its ranks. Subsidiary associations arose in every parish, their members paying one penny a month Catholic rent. There were no less than 30,000 collectors of this rent, and the members could be counted by hundreds of thousands. Under the presidency of the priests these associations had their meeting-place and their meeting once a week, where they

<sup>1</sup> *Letters on the State of Ireland*; Wyse, i. 194-9; Shaw-Lefevre, pp. 50-59.

<sup>2</sup> M'Donagh's *Life of O'Connell*, pp. 125-6.

discussed public questions, ventilated local grievances, transmitted their rent to the central body at Dublin, and got in exchange advice and assistance in their difficulties. Its progress and power so alarmed the Government that a special Act of Parliament suppressing the Association was formed in 1825.

At the same time a Catholic Relief Bill was introduced and passed the House of Commons, though it was thrown out in the Lords. The rejected Bill also provided for payment to the Catholic clergy, and the disfranchisement of the 40s. freeholders, provisions intensely unpopular in Ireland. O'Connell, however, in his anxiety for Emancipation had assented to the measure in its entirety, and for a short time lost the confidence of the Catholics. But he righted himself by expressing regret for what he had done and by denouncing the Algerine Act, as he called the Act suppressing the Association, and by being able to defeat the Act in forming the new Catholic Association for charitable and educational purposes and "for all purposes not prohibited by law."<sup>1</sup>

As a matter of fact, the Algerine Act became a dead letter. The new Catholic Association, it is true, could not by delegates and Committees demand changes either in Church or State, nor consist of affiliated associations, nor correspond with such for obtaining reforms. But it could defend Catholic doctrines and repel Protestant attacks; it could give legal assistance to prisoners and prosecute Orangemen who violated the law; it could pay expenses of petitions and Parliamentary elections; it could advance the cause of education and encourage an honest press; it could take the census and so expose the iniquity of having a majority of the people pay for the church of a small minority. All these things it did. The Catholic rent continued to be collected with such success that £500 a week was sent to Dublin. Aggregate meetings, nominally independent of the Association, but really organized by them, were regularly held in the different counties, and then Provincial meetings on a much larger scale. And at these meetings the

<sup>1</sup> Wyse, pp. 199-224, Appendices xiv. xv. xvi.



priests exhorted, the gentry spoke, sometimes Protestants were present, and often O'Connell or Sheil came from Dublin to encourage the people and pour ridicule on their enemies. Dr. Doyle's pen laid bare the infamies of Irish government, and fearlessly declared that if a rebellion broke out not one of the Catholic bishops would issue a sentence of excommunication against the rebels. The writings of Moore and Sheil struck terror into many a bigot and intimidated many an enemy of the people, and in England they were aided by Jeffrey and Cobbett and Sydney Smith. The English Nonconformists were becoming friendly, and the Ulster Presbyterians for the moment forgot the virtues of John Knox and joined hands with the Papists against a bloated Church Establishment and extortionate tithes. The 40s. freeholders, who were wont to be driven to the poll like cattle to vote for their landlords, revolted, and under the influence of the priests voted for Mr. Dawson in Louth, and defeated the landlord and his nominees. Similar victories were won in Monaghan and Westmeath. Greatest of all was the victory won at Waterford. It was the stronghold of the Beresfords, whom it was considered hopeless to attempt to defeat. Yet the Beresford nominee was opposed, the priests and agitators canvassed and organized and inspired the people with courage, and the candidate of the Catholic Association was placed at the head of the poll.

These things happened in 1826. The next year Lord Liverpool became seriously ill, and resigned the Premiership after holding the office continuously for fifteen years. He was not regretted in Ireland. He was a Conservative of the meaner sort, with a narrow outlook and limited capacity, a man who had such a horror of all change that, as a French writer wittily put it, had he lived on the morning of creation he would have begged God to preserve chaos. He was in sympathy with Castlereagh when he supported the despots who constituted the Holy Alliance ; he also supported Sidmouth in those repressive measures which culminated in the Six Acts and the Peterloo massacre. But when Canning succeeded Castlereagh in 1822 he compelled Liverpool to leave the Catholic question

an open one in the Cabinet, and on the Catholic Relief Bill of 1825 the strange spectacle was seen of Canning supporting the measure, while on the other side was the Home Secretary, Peel. When Canning succeeded Liverpool as Premier, Catholic Ireland was full of hope. But nothing was done. The King stubbornly opposed concession, and so did a majority in the Lords; and Peel, refusing to take office, incessantly attacked the Premier, and probably helped to shorten his days.<sup>1</sup> He died in August 1827.

A nonentity named Lord Goderich succeeded Canning, but his Government did not last, and early in 1828 the Duke of Wellington formed a Government with Peel Home Secretary and Leader of the House of Commons. From these two—both declared enemies of Emancipation—no good was expected in Ireland, and Wellington's brother refusing to serve under an Anti-Catholic Premier, resigned his office of Viceroy. Eldon, however, was not appointed English Chancellor as he expected, and Lord Wellesley's successor, the Marquis of Anglesey, was not unfavourable to the Catholics, one of his first acts being to proclaim an Orange procession in Dublin. All the same, the omens were unpropitious, and it looked as if Emancipation, which lately loomed so large, had again, like the fabled island in the Atlantic, become but a speck on the horizon. And yet the fact was that the crisis had really come, and an event happened before the end of the year which brought the long and weary struggle to a close.

Probably O'Connell would have preferred to get Emancipation from Canning rather than from Wellington and Peel. But he was a practical politician, ready to accept it from any Ministry, and it was consoling that even under Wellington Emancipation was still left an open question, and therefore individual Ministers might vote for it or not as they pleased. It was hopeful also that no attempt had been made to put down the Catholic Association, and no encouragement given to Orange violence by the new Viceroy; and still better that Sir Francis Burdett's motion in favour of the Catholics (in 1828)

<sup>1</sup> Shaw-Lefevre, pp. 80-81.



had been carried in the House of Commons, though it had been defeated in the Lords. And O'Connell rejoiced that the same session witnessed the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts ; for while these Acts remained on the Statute Book they were an argument against Emancipation, and in fact had been often used as such. But it was discouraging that Peel had opposed Burdett's motion, and that Wellington had helped to defeat it in the Lords.

In consequence it was determined by O'Connell and his friends that in every contested election the whole weight of the Catholic Association was to be thrown into the scale against the Government candidate. A contest soon arose which brought the opposing forces into the field. On a minor question of reform the friends of Canning still left in the Ministry had resigned, and in the rearrangement of affairs Mr. Vesey FitzGerald, promoted to the office of President of the Board of Trade, had to seek re-election for the County of Clare. The Catholic Association determined to oppose him, though he was the son of Prime Sergeant FitzGerald, who had so manfully opposed the Union, and though Mr. FitzGerald had on every occasion supported Emancipation. O'Connell was appealed to by Lord John Russell and the principal Whigs on Mr. FitzGerald's behalf, and he would have acceded to their request, but was outvoted at the Catholic Association, and it was resolved to contest Clare. Major M'Namara, a popular Clare landlord, was at first asked to stand ; but after an unreasonable and vexatious delay he declined, and then it was determined that O'Connell himself should be the man. He could not, of course, take the Oath prescribed for a seat in Parliament, but if he were elected he would come thundering at the doors of Parliament, the representative of 6,000,000 of Catholics, and if he were denied admittance it would be impossible to preserve the peace of Ireland.

The memorable contest opened in July. Had it been fought out five years earlier the Catholics would certainly have been beaten. Success depended on the 40s. freeholders, and these were at the mercy of the landlords. Their little holdings

—often but half an acre—were insufficient to support a family; they depended for existence on labour given by their landlords; they were often in arrears of rent; and if they failed to vote as their landlord wished, labour was no longer given and rent was demanded; and if not promptly paid, Peel's Act for cheapening evictions<sup>1</sup> was had recourse to, and the freeholder and his family found themselves on the roadside, and in a country where there was no poor law.<sup>2</sup> But great changes had come. The Catholic Association had grown so powerful that it overshadowed the Viceroy's Government. Week after week the Catholic rent came rolling in. Two churchwardens in each parish took account of all local grievances and sent their information to Dublin, and from Dublin came in return a Weekly Register containing the leader's speeches.<sup>3</sup> The adoption of Mr. Wyse's suggestion to have Liberal Clubs in each parish and County Clubs in correspondence with a head Club in Dublin brought all districts and counties in easy communication.<sup>4</sup> The priests, who in the beginning had held aloof, were everywhere members and leaders of the Catholic Association. A new rent was collected for the special purpose of aiding those freeholders who had been victimized by their votes at the Waterford and Louth elections, and this, while it emboldened the tenants, struck terror into the landlords.<sup>5</sup>

To such perfection had the national organization been brought that 800,000 Catholics had signed a petition in favour of the repeal of the Corporation and Test Acts, and without any difficulty Mr. Sheil's motion was carried out to have on a certain day (January 1828) a meeting to petition Parliament in every parish in Ireland. Nor was this all. Some French travellers had lately written letters from Ireland to French newspapers, and their accounts of Irish misgovernment shocked France. These newspapers were read in Germany and Italy, and when an English traveller in these countries boasted of the glory of his country, he was directed to look at the misgovernment of Ireland. From across the

<sup>1</sup> Mitchel's *History of Ireland*, ii. 149.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 338-40.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* 342-6.

<sup>2</sup> Wyse, i. 214.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* 295-302.



Atlantic came an angrier growl. Already the Irish emigrants were so potent in the United States that they started branches of the Catholic Association. Nova Scotia and Newfoundland, and even South America, also expressed their sympathy.<sup>1</sup> Informed of these things, at last even the 40s. freeholder took courage, and though his position was still that of a slave, he began to assume the manlier attitude of a freeman.

It was in these circumstances that O'Connell issued his address to the Clare electors and came to Ennis with a strong letter of recommendation from Dr. Doyle of Kildare. His agents and helpers who had preceded him had already done much. Sheil's eloquence was hard to resist. Tom Steele, a Protestant and a Clare landlord, had expressed his willingness to fight any of FitzGerald's chief supporters who felt aggrieved, and O'Gorman Mahon, and Honest Jack Lawless, all the way from Ulster, were equally ready with their weapons. Father Tom Maguire, who had lately castigated the Protestant champion Pope, came from Leitrim to lend his aid. Finally, the priests in every parish worked night and day, arguing, entreating, confirming the strong, encouraging the timid, urging all to despise the threats of the landlords, whose object was to keep the people still in chains.

To these appeals an enthusiastic response was given, and to Ennis came the peasants of every district of Clare, from Burren to Loop Head, from the cliffs of Moher to the banks of the Shannon, and during the six days the contest lasted there were no less than 30,000 persons bivouacked in the streets of the county town.

And when O'Connell arrived in his green carriage there was sent up from that mass of men such a shout as made the old Fergus tremble in its bed. The crowd shouted themselves hoarse, threw up their hats, laughed and cried by turns, while the women of Ennis gathered at the windows were no less demonstrative than the men. Nor was there any violence, or rowdyism, or drunkenness, but the most perfect self-restraint, absolute obedience to their priests. Regardless of consequences,

<sup>1</sup> Wyse, i. 305-14.

the tenants openly deserted their landlords. "The landlord," said one of them, "may take my cow, my pig, my home, even my body, but he has no power over my soul," and this was the spirit which universally prevailed. The man who promised the priests and then broke his word was considered to have committed a crime of the blackest dye; and one of the most solemn scenes of the election was witnessed when a priest on the platform and 10,000 men in front of it dropped on their knees in prayer for such a man. He had broken his word to the priest and had died suddenly on the following day, and the people were asked to pray to God that the dead man might be forgiven. When the contest closed, O'Connell had 2054 votes, while only 1075 had voted for FitzGerald. The blindest could see that the crisis had come, that the freeholders of Clare had emancipated Ireland.<sup>1</sup>

The Orangemen were frantic at the prospect of being deprived of their sacred right to trample upon the Catholics. One of the many worthless princes of the House of Hanover, the Duke of Brunswick, had lately declared his abhorrence of Emancipation, and the Orangemen, choosing him for the time as their patron saint, established Brunswick Clubs throughout Ulster. Modelled on the Liberal Clubs, their declared object was to resist Emancipation, as the object of the latter was to obtain it, and when Jack Lawless, accompanied by 140,000 Catholics, entered Monaghan for the purpose of establishing branches there of the Catholic Association, an organized and menacing mob of Orangemen met him at Ballybay, and nothing but the abandonment of the intended meeting saved the opposing forces from a bloody conflict.

On the other hand, the Catholics held meetings in Tipperary at which language of extreme violence was used, and once a police barrack was set on fire. O'Connell, however, interfered and further meetings were abandoned. His return from Clare was a succession of triumphs, but with all his mighty influence he found it hard to restrain his co-religionists, and if concession did not come quickly it would be impossible to keep the peace.

<sup>1</sup> *Sheil's Speeches*, pp. 46, 70; Wyse, pp. 370-98.



The Catholic Archbishop of Armagh, Dr. Curtis, was an old friend of the Duke of Wellington, and to him he made a personal appeal. But the Duke would only promise that if things quieted down in Ireland something might be done. The Archbishop enclosed the letter to Lord Anglesey, and the Viceroy in answering said that he disagreed with Wellington, and that the Catholics ought not to relinquish the employment of all constitutional means for redress. These letters became public, and Wellington instantly recalled Anglesey. His departure in February 1829 reminded men of the departure of Fitzwilliam in 1795; it was equally regretted and created equal alarm as to what might follow.<sup>1</sup> The Ribbonmen became active in Munster; the Catholics everywhere only waited for the word of O'Connell to rise to arms; the Orangemen became more menacing and violent; troops were hurriedly sent across from England; and it seemed as if thirty years after '98 the horrors of '98 were to be renewed.

But other things were happening behind the scenes. In July of the preceding year Anglesey warned the Government that neither the police nor soldiers could be relied on. At the Clare election they had repeatedly cheered O'Connell, and a Welsh regiment lately sent over to Waterford had been guilty of the same offence. It was these things that caused Peel to declare for Emancipation, but he was yielding to necessity rather than to conviction; and while he advised Wellington to settle the Catholic question at once, he desired to resign office rather than be a party to concession. Wellington persuaded him to remain, and concession was decided on.<sup>2</sup> But the King was still obdurate. Wellington, however, worked well on his fears, pointing out that the Catholics would strike against rent and tithes, that the Church in Ireland would be ruined and the Protestants undone. At last, with rage and bitterness,<sup>3</sup> the King yielded, and when Parliament opened in February the King's Speech announced that Emancipation would be granted and the Catholic Association would be

<sup>1</sup> *Greville's Memoirs*, i. 154-8, 163-4; Dunlop's *O'Connell*, pp. 218-20.

<sup>2</sup> Shaw-Lefevre, pp. 92-93.

<sup>3</sup> *Greville*, i. 18.

suppressed. The Bill of Suppression passed both Houses quietly. But before introducing the Catholic Relief Bill, Peel resigned and sought re-election for Oxford University, where he was defeated by a Protestant ascendancy candidate. He was then returned for the borough of Westbury, and in March, in a masterly speech of four hours, he introduced the Emancipation Bill. Catholics were to be admitted to Parliament and Corporations, and to all offices, except a few of the higher, such as the Lord Chancellorship, the office of Viceroy, and that of Commander-in-Chief; Jesuits were to be banished the kingdom; other religious orders rendered incapable of receiving charitable bequests; bishops prohibited from assuming territorial titles; priests from wearing vestments outside their churches; and, further, the 40s. freeholders were disfranchised and the franchise raised to a £10 valuation. There was opposition in both Houses, but the Government were too powerful to be resisted; and the Bill passed its third reading in the Commons by a majority of 178, and in the Lords by a majority of 104. On the 13th of April the Royal Assent was given, and on the following day the new Act became law. Catholic Ireland rejoiced that the measure was not clogged by any conditions about the Veto or the payment of the clergy, and all good men rejoiced that it had passed without the shedding of blood. Had it been carried as part of the Union, the Union would have been regarded by the Catholic masses only as the extinction of a corrupt and bigoted assembly. Had it been carried subsequently by Pitt, they would have been grateful to him for having done what their own Parliament was unwilling to do. Had it passed when Pitt was gone, England would have carried out the promises made at the Union, and the honour of a great nation, tarnished by Pitt, would have been redeemed. But it passed after a toilsome delay of twenty-nine years; after the promises made in 1800 had been in every respect falsified; after concession had been persistently denied; and after a series of savage Coercion Acts had followed each other, year after year, with monotonous regularity. It passed when Ireland was roused as she had



never been before ; when angry Protestants and angry Catholics stood facing each other in menace ; when the alternative before the Government was concession or civil war. Peel gave the credit to Grattan and Plunkett and Canning ; his own speech was grudging, bigoted, unsympathetic ; and it was plain that he would have resisted if he could. With a soldier's frankness, Wellington was plainer still, admitting that he conceded only to avoid the horrors of civil war.

The manner of concession was indeed ungracious. The 40s. freeholders were disfranchised because they were no longer slaves of their landlords, but had the courage to vote for O'Connell. The provisions about bishops and religious orders were irritating. Finally, the new Act was not retrospective. To avoid embarrassing the Government, O'Connell had not attempted to take his seat, and when he did after the Bill was passed, he was tendered the old oath, which he refused. He argued with great ability at the bar of the House that he was entitled to come in under the new oath, but his claim was disallowed by 190 to 116 votes, and two days later, on the 21st of May, a new writ was issued for Clare. Some time elapsed until the Voters' Lists under the new £10 franchise were made out, nor was it until the end of July that the election took place. Of course, O'Connell was elected, and even without opposition. In fact, his journey from Dublin to Limerick, and thence to Ennis, was the march of a conqueror.<sup>1</sup> The slight put upon him by the Government in drafting their Bill—it was said to have been done intentionally by Peel—only endeared him all the more to his own countrymen. They are quick to respond to sympathy and kindness, to forget in concessions graciously given the wrongs of the past. But the manner and spirit in which Emancipation had been conceded showed them that it had been conceded with reluctance, that it was their own strength which had won, that all their appeals to reason and fair-play had fallen upon a barren soil, and that concession came not from England's justice but from her fears.

<sup>1</sup> M'Donagh, pp. 185-90.

## CHAPTER VI

### *After Emancipation*

SELDOM has a leader of men been able to command so completely the attachment of his fellow-countrymen as O'Connell in 1829. If the long struggle had ended in success the Irish people readily recognized that it was to him success was due. Grattan and Plunkett had fought in the cause of Emancipation, and it was the glory of O'Connell to have succeeded where such great men had failed. He was not perhaps more sincere than they had been—for their sincerity was undoubted—but he had far greater capacity for leadership; he employed newer and better methods, and he knew how to employ them with greater skill. He was the first to teach the Catholics to demand equality, not as a favour but as a right; he induced the clergy to join the people and lead them, and he had the satisfaction of seeing that the combination of priests and people was irresistible. With infinite patience, with unwearied energy, with grim tenacity, so unusual in an Irish leader, he had for more than twenty-five years combated bigotry. Grudging no labour, sparing no effort, he sacrificed time which was badly wanted by the exacting demands of his profession. His courage, his resource, his zeal in the people's cause could not escape recognition, and long before 1829 he had outdistanced all other leaders in the people's esteem. To the Catholics, so long insulted and despised, it was matter for pride that one of their race and creed was able to champion their cause against the ablest champions of ascendancy, and on more than equal terms. The Government informer could no longer convict innocence by perjury without having his infamy exposed; the Crown lawyer's sneers and insults were paid back by ridicule



and sarcasm ; the partisan judge who had so often browbeaten the Catholic client and lawyer was now confronted by a fearless advocate who rebuked his partisanship and his bigotry, and laid bare his ignorance of law ; and when the Orange Corporation of Dublin was described by O'Connell as a beggarly Corporation and an Orange champion stepped forward to defend it, O'Connell met him on the duelling field and shot him dead. Slaves the Catholics had been in their own land, but O'Connell infused into them the spirit of freemen ; their gratitude was unbounded, and had he asked them in 1829 to follow him to battle they would have done so with enthusiasm. There was, however, no necessity for such heroic measures, and it is one of O'Connell's great merits that without the shedding of a single drop of blood his victory had been won.

In the estimation of the more ignorant among the Catholics that victory meant the advent of the millennium.<sup>1</sup> Tithes and rents were to be reduced, recurrent famines to cease, poverty to be lessened, prosperity to increase. The bonfires which lighted the hill-tops in honour of the new enactment announced a new era of contentment and happiness ; and a Limerick farmer, being asked what he understood by Emancipation, answered at once that the labourer who had worked for sixpence a day would henceforth get a shilling.<sup>2</sup> These absurd hopes seriously entertained indicated a low state of political intelligence, and were not, of course, indulged in by O'Connell. When he wrote from London, the day after the Emancipation Bill passed, he dated his letter the first day of Freedom.<sup>3</sup> The Catholics, at last admitted to the rights of citizens, were theoretically on a level with the Protestants ; but O'Connell knew well that the equality was only in theory. In every country much depends on the spirit in which laws are administered, and the administration of law in Ireland still remained in Protestant hands. The high officers of State, from the Viceroy down, were of that creed ; the Under-Secretary, Gregory, who controlled the

<sup>1</sup> Gregory's *Letter-Box*, p. 267.

<sup>2</sup> Lefanu, *Seventy Years of Irish Life*, p. 312.

<sup>3</sup> FitzPatrick's *Correspondence of O'Connell*, i. 180.

executive throughout the country, was a bitter and bigoted enemy of the Catholics; the sheriffs, the grand jurors, the magistrates in the inferior courts, the judges in the superior courts, were men of the same stamp; the tithe farmer and tithe proctor were still supported by Government and by law in all these extortions; the landlord could still rack-rent and underpay his labourer; the Church of the masses remained impoverished and its ministers despised, while the scanty earnings of the Catholic masses went to maintain a Church which they abhorred, and kept its ministers in indolence and luxury, with fine churches and glebes and fat incomes, some of whom had not a single Protestant in their parishes.<sup>1</sup>

"Men are mistaken," said O'Connell, "who suppose that the history of the world will be over as soon as we are emancipated. *That* will be the time to *commence* the struggle for popular rights."<sup>2</sup> In such a struggle the Catholic lawyer who wanted a seat on the bench, the place-hunter who entered Parliament only to betray the people, would be of little use. But O'Connell was a host in himself, and had Emancipation done nothing else than admit him to the House of Commons, it would have been a great gain for Ireland. His countrymen, in gratitude for his services, wished to present him with a National testimonial, and when it was ascertained that henceforth he would devote his whole time to Parliamentary affairs and sacrifice his lucrative practice at the Bar, the testimonial took the form of an annual tribute. It became known as the O'Connell Rent, hardly ever fell in any year below £16,000, and sometimes went far beyond this figure, and to the end of O'Connell's life was managed with great care and prudence by his life-long friend, Mr. P. V. FitzPatrick.<sup>3</sup>

Secured in this income, O'Connell ceased his practice at the Bar and appeared only when some great emergency arose, or when the lives or liberties of the people were specially imperilled. Quite satisfied that the Union was an iniquitous transaction which was inflicting serious injury on Ireland, he

<sup>1</sup> *Creevy Papers*, ii. 76.

<sup>2</sup> Dunlop's *O'Connell*, p. 222.

<sup>3</sup> *O'Connell's Correspondence*, i. 202.



endeavoured to have the Union repealed, and for that purpose, in the autumn and winter of 1829, he appealed in many public letters to the Protestants for their assistance. He asked them to join him in lessening burdens, in advancing trade and commerce, in establishing popular rights, in curbing class monopoly, in purifying the grand juries and corporations, in protecting the Parliamentary voters by the secrecy of the ballot.<sup>1</sup>

This was his programme when he took his seat in Parliament early in 1830. He was then at an age when men do not easily accommodate themselves to new surroundings, and the fact that he was without a rival on an Irish platform and at the Irish Bar was no guarantee that he would be a success in Parliament. Yet he soon became one of the greatest Parliamentary debaters, speaking on law reform, on Parliamentary reform, on Irish distress, even on purely Imperial questions, and on all these speaking well.<sup>2</sup> But though he acquired Parliamentary eminence, he could do nothing for Ireland, for he spoke to unsympathetic ears. A few only among the Liberals—the Radical section—gave him any assistance, and as for the Tories, they regarded him and his programme with aversion. They had granted Emancipation ungraciously and reluctantly, and they were resolved that there should be no further concessions. Goulburn, the Chief Secretary, as well as his successor, Sir Henry Hardinge, were patrons and favourers of the Orangemen; they both resisted every attempt at popular agitation and rigorously enforced the Coercion Act of the previous year; and O'Connell was satisfied that the only hope for Ireland was to drive the Duke of Wellington from power.<sup>3</sup> That event happened in a few months. George IV. died in June, and a general election followed in July, when the Tories came back with a diminished majority, and in the following November they were defeated and were replaced by a Whig Ministry under Lord Grey.

This turn of events gave much satisfaction to O'Connell.

<sup>1</sup> Dunlop, p. 237.

<sup>2</sup> Cusack, i. 29, 38-40.

<sup>3</sup> *O'Connell's Correspondence*, i. 203-5.

George IV. had consistently opposed all reform, and Ireland rejoiced to see the end of his career of infamy. His successor, William IV., on the contrary, had spoken and voted for Emancipation in the House of Lords. Lord Grey, the friend of Fox and Sheridan and Grattan, had suffered for his Liberal convictions in long exclusion from office. Among his Ministers, Lord Brougham and Lord John Russell were on friendly terms with O'Connell; and Lord Melbourne and Mr. Grant had filled the office of Chief Secretary, and because of their impartiality had incurred the enmity of the Orangemen. Lord Anglesey, the new Viceroy, had left Ireland in the previous year, telling O'Connell to continue his agitation, and with a reputation for justice and fair-play not inferior to that of Lord Fitzwilliam. As for Stanley, the new Chief Secretary, he was a young man of thirty, not yet tried in any high office; but he was known to be a man of great courage and ability, and of splendid debating power, who had already made his mark in Parliament. O'Connell himself was satisfied that Anglesey was going to Ireland with the best intentions, and he hoped that he would at least alleviate, if he could not cure, the national miseries.<sup>1</sup>

These hopes were soon blighted. Before his departure for Ireland, Anglesey had an interview with O'Connell, to whom he offered high Government office, hoping thus to purchase his co-operation and goodwill. But O'Connell declined office, and would co-operate only on condition that in addition to legislative reform there should be a complete change in the composition of the Irish Executive. Undoubtedly Anglesey favoured a Tithe Bill and also a measure directing the surplus revenues of the Protestant Church to education and relief of the poor; but in these matters he was overruled by Stanley, who had a seat in the Cabinet, and who had at all times much more sympathy with coercion than with concession. In Irish administration the Viceroy did well in dismissing Gregory, but worse than ill in making Doherty Chief-Justice and Blackbourne Attorney-General, both of whom, especially

<sup>1</sup> *O'Connell's Correspondence*, i. 23-33.



Doherty, were intensely unpopular; while liberal lawyers such as O'Loughlin and Perrin and Holmes were left out in the cold.<sup>1</sup>

O'Connell felt specially aggrieved, for Doherty was a personal and a bitter enemy, and even friends of the Government felt that such an appointment was needlessly irritating and provocative.<sup>2</sup> After all, if the aid of the Irish leader was sought for by the Whigs, something more than insults should be given in exchange; the denial of concession on one side, met on the other by agitation and defiance, must necessarily end in conflict rather than in co-operation, and when Anglesey entered Dublin his reception was chilly, while O'Connell entered the city welcomed by cheering crowds.

While the Tories were still in office, O'Connell had established the "Anti-Union Association." This, however, was at once suppressed by Government, as was also another association, "The Irish Volunteers for the Repeal of the Union." Then O'Connell established "Repeal Breakfasts" at a Dublin hotel, at which Anti-Union speeches were made, and he had the satisfaction of seeing that the Crown lawyers could not pronounce them illegal. He had also the satisfaction of hurling some abusive epithets at the Chief Secretary, Hardinge, whom he described as "a contemptible little soldier," "the chance child of fortune and war."<sup>3</sup> In Mr. Stanley he found a bolder and an abler foe. Every political Society formed was instantly suppressed, even "A Party meeting for Dinner at Hayes' Tavern." By flattering the Orangemen, and even drinking at a public dinner the Orange toast of the "Glorious, pious and immortal memory," O'Connell had brought Orange and Green together; the movement for repeal was attaining such dimensions that Stanley resolved to strike hard; and Anglesey, after consulting his law officers and having O'Connell arrested, declared that "things had come to that

<sup>1</sup> Greville, ii. 101-3, 110-11; FitzPatrick's *Doyle*, i. 233-50; *O'Connell's Correspondence*, i. 237-8.

<sup>2</sup> M'Donagh's *O'Connell*, pp. 215-16, 217.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 210-12.

pass that the question is whether O'Connell or I shall rule Ireland."

The arrest took place in January 1831, the trial in the following month, part of the indictment being under the ordinary law, part under the Coercion Act of 1829. To the charge of having broken the former, O'Connell pleaded not guilty. He agreed, however, to plead guilty to having broken the Coercion Act, but with the proviso that he was not to come up for judgment till April, a date subsequently postponed till May. Stanley and his law officers were jubilant at thus having caught their great antagonist. But the fact was he had outwitted them, for before May came the Coercion Act had expired, and he could no longer be punished under an Act which had ceased to exist.<sup>1</sup>

If Stanley was disappointed at the result, his Ministerial colleagues were not,<sup>2</sup> for the Reform struggle was proceeding and O'Connell's aid was earnestly sought, as it was ungrudgingly given. After the general election of 1830 he was at the head of a strong party, which was augmented at the election in the next year. At the head of this party he saved the Whigs from defeat, for the first Bill was carried only by a majority of one; the third and last Bill he supported at the head of a party of fifty-three. He supported Government candidates at the polls; he consistently supported the Reform Bills by speech and vote in Parliament; he even ceased his repeal agitation the better to aid the Whigs; nor did he cease to aid them until the third Reform Bill of 1832 became law. For all this he got little in return. He asked for Ireland as part of the measure of reform an extended franchise such as had been given to Great Britain, but was refused. Seeing what Ireland's population was, he asked for at least 25 additional members, but got only 5. He expected that Stanley and Anglesey would be removed, but they were retained after the Reform Act as before. He expected a change in the spirit of Irish government, and found Protestant ascendancy still in power, and not a single Catholic appointed

<sup>1</sup> M'Donagh, pp. 220-23.

<sup>2</sup> *O'Connell's Correspondence*, i. 250.



stipendiary magistrate, nor a single one on the bench. Instead of being thanked he was hated by the King, and equally so by Lord Grey, and in Parliament he was frequently assailed by Stanley with bitter invective. Worst of all, instead of some measures of reform being attempted, the first Irish Bill of the Reformed Parliament in 1833 was a savage Coercion Act.<sup>1</sup>

At that date, it is true, much lawlessness prevailed, the result of great suffering and discontent. Though crops had failed and poverty was extreme,<sup>2</sup> excessive rent and tithes were exacted; a Vestry cess was still levied for repairs of Protestant churches; and the tithe proctor was protected and sustained by an insolent and lawless yeomanry.<sup>3</sup> As no redress could be had from Parliament, secret societies increased—Blackfeet, Whitefeet, Terryalts, Ribbonmen and others—and in one year no less than 196 murders were committed.<sup>4</sup> With the approbation of O'Connell and Dr. Doyle, the collection of tithes was met with passive resistance, and when cattle or crops or furniture was seized by the proctors and offered at public auction, nobody would buy. Sometimes the people's patience was exhausted, and they resisted the serving of processes, and compelled the proctors to eat them instead of serving them. The result was collision and murder. At Newtownbarry in Wexford, in June 1831, the people attending a tithe auction were fired on by the police and yeomanry, 13 being killed and many more wounded; at Skibbereen the parson, though he knew that the people were in such want that they were living on seaweed and nettles, insisted on his tithes, and being resisted, his escort of police and yeomanry shot 30 persons dead. At Carrickshock in Carlow (December 1831) a young man who endeavoured to seize the processes was shot dead, and the enraged crowd fell with fury on the police, killing 11 of them, not a few of themselves also losing their lives.<sup>5</sup> Instead of regarding these painful occurrences as the natural

<sup>1</sup> M'Donagh, pp. 224-6.

<sup>2</sup> *O'Connell's Correspondence*, i. 284; *MacHale's Letters*, pp. 202, 206.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* i. 282-3; *Life of Doyle*, i. 518, ii. 256.

<sup>4</sup> *Doyle*, ii. 329, 458.

<sup>5</sup> *O'Connell's Correspondence*, i. 277; *Doyle*, pp. 403-6; *Mitchel*, ii. 173.

outcome of injustice crying aloud for a remedy, Parliament only talked of Irish lawlessness and confiscation of Church property ; and in lieu of tithes which could not be collected, the enormous sum of £1,000,000 was voted to the Protestant clergy. A Parliamentary Committee then investigated the tithe question ; and though Dr. Doyle had no difficulty in showing the essential injustice of the system,<sup>1</sup> a Liberal Government did nothing but pass a "Tithe Composition Act" (1832), making tithes payable in money ; and a "Church Temporalities Act" (1833), reducing the number of Protestant bishops from 22 to 12, diverting the saving thus effected to the building and repair of churches, and by consequence abolishing the vexatious Vestry cess.<sup>2</sup>

But tithes were still to be paid, and to crush all resistance a Coercion Act was passed (1833) empowering the Viceroy to proclaim any meeting he pleased, even a meeting to petition ; to put any district under martial law by which all offences committed there might be tried in the military courts by military officers ; and in all such districts the inhabitants were bound to keep indoors from sunset to sunrise.<sup>3</sup> No Coercion Act of such atrocious severity as this had been passed since the Union. It seems certain from his letters to Lord Cloncurry,<sup>4</sup> it was not sought for by Anglesey, least of all unaccompanied by generous healing measures ; it was not favoured by the Ministry as a whole ; and Lord Althorp, who introduced it, did so without enthusiasm or conviction.<sup>5</sup> It was combated at every stage with consummate ability by O'Connell, aided by some of the Radicals. But Stanley fought for the whole Bill with desperate energy, gave a lurid picture of Irish lawlessness and crime, assailed O'Connell with venom and bitterness as the centre and guide of Irish disaffection, and at length, by boldness of statement, by reckless assertion, which his great talents made appear as arguments, he convinced

<sup>1</sup> *Doyle*, ii. 385-99.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 313, 460.

<sup>3</sup> *Mitchel's History of Ireland*, ii. 178.

<sup>4</sup> *Personal Recollections*, pp. 366, 437-8, 440, 442, 450-51.

<sup>5</sup> *O'Connell's Correspondence*, i. 331.



those who had been unconvinced and the measure became law. O'Connell was furious, denounced the Chief Secretary as Scorpion Stanley, the majority in Parliament as 600 scoundrels, and Lord Grey and his party as "the base, brutal and bloody Whigs." In reality the new Act did not put down Irish crime.<sup>1</sup> Nor was it rigorously enforced, and if it had been it would have brought on civil war. The conviction increased among the Liberals that Anglesey and Stanley were unsuitable for their positions, and before many months they were replaced by Lord Wellesley and Sir T. Hobhouse, who in a few months made way for Mr. Littleton. Anglesey was recalled without receiving any office or honours, but Stanley's talents were too brilliant to be dispensed with, and he was promoted to the office of Colonial Secretary.<sup>2</sup>

In Ireland he had given great offence by his bitter personal attacks on O'Connell and by his partiality for Coercion and Orange ascendancy. And yet it would be unjust to deny that in what he did for primary education he went far beyond any of his predecessors, and conferred a real boon on the masses of the people. Seeing the utter failure of the Charter Schools to educate the Catholics, and believing that some education should be provided for them, some well-intentioned Protestants had, nearly twenty years previously, established a Society at Kildare Street, Dublin, the object of which was to promote the secular education of the lower classes, leaving their religious education in the hands of the ministers of the different churches. O'Connell favoured the Society and became a member of the Board, and for many years it received a grant from Parliament. But gradually it fell into the hands of bigots and fanatics, who wished that the Bible without note or comment should be taught in every school. The result was that the Catholics ceased to frequent the Society Schools, and even fair-minded Protestants refused to identify themselves with the agents of Bible Societies and proselytizing institutions. Withdrawing all Government grants from the Society, Stanley had the Irish

<sup>1</sup> *O'Connell's Correspondence*, i. 331.

<sup>2</sup> *Greville's Memoirs*, ii. 374, 380-81.

National Education Act passed, under which the Viceroy set up a National Education Board, representative of all creeds, and under which children of all creeds were to be educated. No payment was to be given for religious teaching, but such teaching was not disallowed, and indeed was encouraged, though never to be given during the time set apart for secular teaching.<sup>1</sup> For many years the representation of the Catholics on the Board was inadequate;<sup>2</sup> yet it was much to have Parliament recognize that Catholics ought to be educated at the expense of the State, and without any compromise of their faith; and the system was tolerated rather than welcomed by the Catholic clergy as an advance towards justice and fair-play.<sup>3</sup>

Between the new Chief Secretary and the new Viceroy the relations were more cordial than those which had existed between Stanley and Anglesey. Wellesley, whose son-in-law Littleton was, had no sympathy with Orange intolerance, and thought it hard that no serious effort had hitherto been made to have Catholic Emancipation a reality; and Littleton was no believer in Coercion, and was in high favour with O'Connell. Had his hands been free he would certainly have introduced measures of reform; but such measures could not be passed by a Government in which Stanley and men like him held commanding positions. Something was urgently needed in the matter of tithes, for their execution was the main reason why the state of Ireland was one of suppressed war;<sup>4</sup> and when Littleton introduced a Bill (May 1834) commuting tithes into a land tax amounting to 80 per cent of the tithe, even Stanley supported the measure. But on a further motion of the Government to appoint a Commission of Inquiry into the revenues of the Irish Church and the number of its members compared with the whole population, he and those of his colleagues in the Ministry resigned—the Duke of Richmond, Lord Ripon and Sir James Graham.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Stanley's letter to the Duke of Leinster, giving an outline of the scheme, October 1831 (*Halliday Pamphlets*, No. 1536).

<sup>2</sup> *MacHale's Letters*, pp. 393-400.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 410.

<sup>4</sup> G. C. Lewis's *Local Disturbances in Ireland*, p. 176.

<sup>5</sup> *Greville*, iii. 90.



A month later the question of renewing Stanley's Coercion Act of the preceding year was considered. Wellesley, who at first favoured the re-enactment of the whole measure, saw reason to change his mind, and subsequently advised dropping the public meeting clauses; and his later view was strongly supported by Lords Althorp, Brougham and Melbourne, as well as by Mr. Littleton. But Grey, who was as violent a coercionist as Stanley, would have the whole Bill and insisted on its introduction.<sup>1</sup>

In the meantime O'Connell, who had been vigorously agitating the question of repeal, was induced by Littleton to moderate his activity, and had been assured that only a mild Coercion Bill would be introduced. When Grey brought in the harsher measure, O'Connell, believing he had been deceived, told the House of Commons of the assurances he had received. Littleton tried to explain and then tendered his resignation, which Grey refused to accept; while Grey himself, disgusted at these negotiations carried on behind his back, resigned office, and Lord Althorp followed Grey.<sup>2</sup> The King was anxious to have a Coalition Ministry under Lord Melbourne, but as this was found impossible, Melbourne formed a Whig Ministry, in which Althorp reluctantly consented to hold office.<sup>3</sup> A few months later, however (November 1834), Althorp succeeded his father as Earl Spencer and went to the House of Lords; and the King, tired of the Whigs, summarily dismissed Melbourne and called the Tories to office under Peel.<sup>4</sup> After the General Election which followed in January 1835, O'Connell held the balance of power.<sup>5</sup> He had aided the Whigs at the polls, and he now joined with them in driving Peel from office;<sup>6</sup> and then, sustained by him, Melbourne became Prime Minister, and retained power for six years.

In the meantime one notable figure passed away in Ireland in the person of Dr. Doyle, Bishop of Kildare. He died young,

<sup>1</sup> Bryce, p. 335; *Lord Hatherton's (Littleton's) Memoirs*, pp. 8-10, 13-14, 38.

<sup>2</sup> *Greville*, iii. 105-7, 113; *Hatherton*, pp. 57, 61-63.

<sup>3</sup> *Greville*, iii. 114, 116.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* 148-51.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* 261.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* 246.

being only forty-eight years old at his death in 1834 ; but he had already acquired enduring fame—such fame as had not been acquired by an Irish Churchman since the days of St. Malachy. His private life was that of an exemplary Christian, full of piety and charity and religious zeal ; his episcopal rule was marked by prudence and justice. But though scrupulously exact in the discharge of his ecclesiastical duties, he did not hesitate to enter the domain of politics, and during the fifteen years that he was Bishop there were few public questions which did not attract some illuminating contribution from his pen. Nor was he fearful of incurring unpopularity, but fearlessly spoke out what he considered best for his country and Church. By frequently and fiercely denouncing Secret Societies, he incurred the displeasure of many who looked to Parliament with despair ;<sup>1</sup> he was not averse to mixed education ;<sup>2</sup> in opposition to the views of his Episcopal brethren, he joined the Catholic Association when it had few friends ;<sup>3</sup> though he opposed the Veto, he was willing to consent to other securities,<sup>4</sup> which most of his countrymen would not grant ; and he favoured a poor law,<sup>5</sup> and opposed repeal,<sup>6</sup> in spite of the opposition of O'Connell. Sometimes he earned praise from those in power, though he never sought it or wished it ; and no indictment of Irish government could be more scathing than that contained in his letters on the state of Ireland. Friends and enemies acknowledged the purity of his motives ; and the vast knowledge and commanding ability he displayed before two Parliamentary Committees created a profound impression and extorted admiration from his bitterest foes.<sup>7</sup>

To find a successor to such a man was difficult, but one was found in Dr. MacHale, for some years Bishop of Killala, and who, the same year in which Doyle died, became Archbishop of Tuam. His intellect was not less powerful than Doyle's, his knowledge not less extensive, his political views

<sup>1</sup> Fitzpatrick's *Life of Doyle*, i. 204-5, ii. 329-30, 409-10.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* i. 10.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* i. 282.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* i. 167, 173.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* ii. 207-12, 285-8, 366-72.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* ii. 230.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.* i. 402-4, ii. 385-99, 403-6.



not less sound, and he was equally without fear. His style of writing, indeed, was without the lightness and grace of Doyle's, and he appealed with less effect to the prejudices of the English ruling classes. But, on the other hand, he surpassed Doyle in influence with the masses of his countrymen, he reached their level with greater ease, and when he opposed O'Connell, as he sometimes did, he was a more dangerous opponent than Doyle had ever been. Usually, indeed, he acted with the great agitator, who always treated him with profound respect and was profoundly grateful for his assistance. But MacHale was out of sympathy with O'Connell's policy during the Melbourne administration, and no entreaty and no arguments could change his views, or extort approval where he so strongly disapproved.

The position was certainly peculiar and might well have caused two able and far-seeing Irishmen to differ as to the best policy to be pursued. In the House of Commons the Tories had a compact and a homogeneous party of more than 260, led with consummate ability by Peel; while in the House of Lords, under Wellington, they were in a permanent majority. Though Wellington had granted Emancipation in 1829, he had ever since endeavoured to spoil the happy and healing effects of the measure by patronizing and sustaining Orange ascendancy; and Lyndhurst, who was a much abler political leader, vehemently declared that the Irish were not entitled to the same rights as Englishmen, for they were "aliens in blood, language and religion." Had the Tories been as numerous as the Whigs, it is hard to say how far they might have gone in order to purchase the support of O'Connell, for an English party has always been ready to sacrifice much for office. Nor would O'Connell, being a practical politician, have rejected concessions from them, and would have been quick to see the advantage of an alliance with a party which could at all times obtain a smooth passage for its measures through the House of Lords. But an alliance with the Tories being out of the question, he turned to the Whigs, and here too there were difficulties. The Whigs, unlike the Tories, were not a homogeneous party.

A few followed the lead of Stanley, who on Irish questions was much more of a Tory than Peel, and considered any interference with the Irish Church as nothing less than a sacrilege. The more moderate Whigs looked to Grey for a leader—a man whose Irish record was especially bad, and who was especially obnoxious to O'Connell. Lastly, there was the main body of Whigs and all the Radicals ready to follow Melbourne and coalesce with O'Connell on the basis of granting concessions to Ireland.<sup>1</sup> All these parties, however, whether Whig or Tory, were determinedly opposed to Repeal, and when O'Connell brought forward his Repeal motion in 1834, only one English member voted with him, his motion being rejected by 523 to 38 votes.<sup>2</sup>

The new Parliament opened in February 1835, and Peel, though in a minority, determined to continue in office. One of his first measures was an Irish Tithe Commutation Bill, making tithes payable as a rent charge amounting to 75 per cent of the tithe. It would have been well if O'Connell had allowed the Bill to pass, for Ireland would then have been saved further years of bloodshed and strife. But he had set his heart on having the surplus revenues of the Irish Church devoted to purposes of education, and as Peel's Bill contained no appropriation clause, he opposed it. He was joined by the Whigs, with the result that on the question of appropriation Peel was repeatedly defeated, and in the following April resigned, being succeeded by Lord Melbourne.<sup>3</sup> The coalition thus formed against Peel was the result of an arrangement entered into by O'Connell and the Whig leaders earlier in the year. It was often called the Lichfield House Compact, because the meetings were held at Lichfield House, though Lord John Russell repudiated the word "compact" and described the arrangement as an "alliance on honourable terms of mutual co-operation." But whether it be called a compact or an alliance matters little: there was certainly an

<sup>1</sup> *Greville*, iii. 242, 247.

<sup>2</sup> Bryce, *Two Centuries of Irish History*, p. 329.

<sup>3</sup> *Greville*, iii. 253.



understanding, there were mutual promises made and mutual obligations incurred. On his side O'Connell was to cease agitating repeal. On the other side the Whigs were to settle the question of tithes and with an appropriation clause; the Irish municipal corporations were to be reformed; there was to be no coercion, no interference with the right of public meetings, and Irish administration in all its branches was to be purified.<sup>1</sup> O'Connell himself was anxious to get the position of Attorney-General for Ireland, but the King would on no account consent to give him office.<sup>2</sup> He had, however, the satisfaction of seeing Lord Mulgrave, an advanced Liberal, appointed Viceroy, and Lord Morpeth Chief Secretary, his friend Mr. Perrin Attorney-General, and his friend and co-religionist, Mr. O'Loughlin, Solicitor-General. And it pleased him much that while his friend Lord Duncannon was in the Cabinet, both Stanley and Lord Grey were excluded.<sup>3</sup>

About passing a Tithe Bill there were special difficulties. The Tories, having been driven from office on the question of appropriation, felt bound to continue their opposition, and they were backed by the House of Lords. The Whigs, having refused to accept a mere Commutation Bill—without appropriation—felt bound with O'Connell to insist on the larger measure, and each year a Tithe Bill with an appropriation clause passed the Commons, only to have the clause expunged in the House of Lords. And meanwhile the iniquitous system under which so much turbulence arose and so many lives were lost continued. At last the spirit of party gave way to the spirit of justice, and Whigs and Tories, weary of the struggle, agreed. O'Connell and the Whigs gave up appropriation, and a Tithe Commutation Bill passed, under which tithes became a rent charge amounting to 75 per cent of the existing tithe composition.<sup>4</sup> Two years later a Municipal Reform Bill became law. Year after year the Bill was introduced and year after year it was

<sup>1</sup> *O'Connell's Correspondence*, ii. 1-12.

<sup>2</sup> *Greville*, iii. 258; *Melbourne's Memoirs*, ii. 118-21.

<sup>3</sup> *Melbourne's Memoirs*, ii. 128-9.

<sup>4</sup> *Bryce*, pp. 362-3.

opposed by Peel in the Commons, and thrown out or amended out of existence in the Lords. In neither House could any defence be made of the existing corporations, which were known to be centres of bigotry and corruption, of peculation and plunder. At last a Reform Bill was passed in 1840, but not one similar to that which had been passed for England. The franchise was fixed at £10; the corporations could not appoint their Sheriffs nor control the police, and a number of the smaller corporations were abolished.<sup>1</sup>

One other remedial measure was the Poor Law Act of 1838. A Poor Law Commission in 1836 had reported that out of a population of 8,000,000, nearly 2,500,000 were for six months in each year on the verge of starvation,<sup>2</sup> so that obviously some form of State relief was necessary. But O'Connell was reluctant to have any such measure. He thought the relief of the poor ought to be left to private benevolence and Christian charity, and that between the destitute who suffered and those who pitied and sympathized and were ready to aid it was wrong for the State to intervene.<sup>3</sup> Dr. Doyle, on the contrary, advocated the striking of a poor rate in each parish, but only as a supplement to private charity, and he would have this administered by the clergy and other representative men of the parish, who would be then able to detect undeserving applicants.<sup>4</sup> Dr. MacHale favoured relief in the shape of public and useful works such as the reclamation of water-lands. Dr. Whateley was opposed to workhouses.<sup>5</sup> All were opposed to the introduction of the English system of Poor Law. Yet it was the English system which was introduced. Workhouses to the number of 130, one for each Union, were built and within a few years opened. These workhouses in too many cases were the scenes of sectarian strife and attempted proselytism; they became the homes of pampered and highly-paid officials; and side by side with the

<sup>1</sup> Bryce, pp. 364-5.

<sup>2</sup> *O'Connell's Speeches*, i. 494.

<sup>3</sup> *Speeches*, i. 453-6, 490-514; *Correspondence*, ii. 127, 129.

<sup>4</sup> *Letters on the State of Ireland*, Letters xi. and xii.; *Life*, ii. 285-6, 362.

<sup>5</sup> *Life*, i. 199-200, 395-6



destitute and deserving poor grew up the idle, the lazy, the vicious and the immoral.

These three measures, meagre, miserable and grudging, were all the legislative concessions that came to Ireland from the Lichfield House Compact ; and when it is remembered that the alliance lasted for six years, it cannot be denied that the tree which had promised so much fruit had borne but little.

Much better work was done in changing the character of Irish administration. O'Connell's main anxiety was that the Orangemen should cease to rule Ireland ; and the Orangemen, on their side, were so disgusted at his friendship with the new Viceroy that they derisively called the latter the O'Mulgrave. They had, however, much more to fear from the new Under-Secretary, Mr. Drummond. His appointment had been suggested by the Attorney-General, Mr. Perrin, who pointed out to Lord Mulgrave that, as there was to be change of system, there ought to be a change of men ; and accordingly Sir William Gosset, the Under-Secretary, became in 1835 Sergeant-at-Arms, and Mr. Drummond took his place. He was a Scotchman not quite forty years of age, and had formerly been an officer in the Engineers, then for some years attached to the Ordnance Survey of Ireland, and subsequently private secretary to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Lord Althorp.<sup>1</sup> During his stay in Ireland he had learned to love its people, and he eagerly seized the opportunity of serving them. He was a man of fine capacity, of tireless energy, devoted to the public service, conscientious in the discharge of his duties, thinking clearly, seeing far, heedless of clamour, indifferent to applause, a man just, firm, fearless and strong, of iron determination and inflexible will. He found in Ireland, which was overwhelmingly Catholic, that Catholics were excluded from all honours and offices. Mr. O'Loughlin was the first Catholic who became Solicitor-General, and the first Catholic Judge since the days of James II.<sup>2</sup> Every position of influence and profit was in the hands of Protestants—not

<sup>1</sup> *Life of Drummond*, pp. 65-66.

<sup>2</sup> *Melbourne*, ii. 203-4.

the tolerant or fair-minded Protestants who wished to live at peace with their Catholic neighbours, but rather those who belonged to the Orange Society, militant, aggressive, intolerant, regarding every Catholic as an enemy, and seeming to have no higher ambition than to imbrue their hands in Catholic blood. In 1827 both the Catholic Association and the Orange Society were suppressed, but the latter had been revived and was now more active than ever. It had its affiliated lodges, its oaths and pass-words and signs, its elaborate ritual, which was a curious compound of love and hate, of Christian piety and ferocious bigotry.<sup>1</sup> These Orangemen frequently paraded in ordered masses, with bands and banners and drums, playing such provocative party airs as the Protestant Boys, the Boyne Water and Croppies Lie Down. Their orators insulted the Pope and ridiculed Catholic doctrines; they gloried in the name of William III., and taunted the Catholics with the memory of Protestant victories and Catholic defeats. Not infrequently they wrecked Catholic houses, destroyed Catholic property, and wantonly sacrificed Catholic lives. Nor had the aggrieved Catholics any redress. The Constabulary, the Yeomanry, the Army were manned by Orangemen. The rural magistrates were recruited from the Orange lodges; Orange High Sheriffs took care to empanel only Protestant juries; the high officials were Orangemen; and the Catholic who appealed from an inferior to a superior Court had in some cases but a small chance of justice from the ermine-clad Orangeman on the Bench. To such an extent was Orange intolerance carried that the Protestant police who did their duty fairly were denounced by the lodges, as were those who favoured Reform or Catholic Emancipation; and one Orangeman was expelled from his lodge because he had entertained O'Connell at breakfast.<sup>2</sup>

Nor was the Orange Society the only source from which trouble came and anxiety rose. Factions were still prevalent and often led to serious breaches of the peace. The neglect of

<sup>1</sup> *Melbourne*, ii. 102-7.

<sup>2</sup> O'Brien's *Life of Drummond*, pp. 110-24, 128-32.



Parliament and the unrestrained violence of the Orangemen strengthened the hands of the Secret Societies; and the Ribbonmen, absorbing the other societies, had grown to formidable dimensions.<sup>1</sup> The high rents paid to the landlords while prices were inflated during the great war were still exacted, though prices had fallen heavily with the fall of Napoleon. Grasping and unfeeling parsons would have their tithes from poverty-stricken peasants, whose stomachs cried out for food and whose bodies were clothed in rags. The people led by O'Connell and Dr. MacHale refused to pay, conflicts ensued and blood was shed, and in the end of 1834 the tithe battle of Rathcormack recalled and exceeded the horrors of Newtownbarry and Carrickshock.<sup>2</sup>

To grapple with all these difficulties was a task from which even Hercules might have recoiled. But Drummond was not dismayed, and gathering into his hands the threads of Irish government, he manfully girded himself for the struggle. In spite of Orange clamour he put Catholics on the Bench and in the Privy Council. He appointed Catholics and Liberal Protestants as Sheriffs, who ceased to pack the juries with Orangemen. He made a personal appeal to the factions to cease their faction fights, and with good results;<sup>3</sup> and his evident determination to do justice had a soothing effect on the Ribbonmen.<sup>4</sup> He disbanded the Orange Yeomanry and had an Act of Parliament passed taking appointments to the Constabulary force out of the hands of Orange local magistrates, and thus enabling Catholics to enter its ranks. With a strong hand he put down Orange processions,<sup>5</sup> censured or dismissed officials who indulged in Orange bravado, and when a bellicose Orange colonel named Verner toasted the battle of the Diamond at an election dinner, and insolently refused either to apologize or explain, Drummond had him promptly dismissed from the commission of the peace and struck off the list of Deputy-Lieutenants for Tyrone.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> O'Brien's *Life of Drummond*, pp. 94, 248-9.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 247-8.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* 129, 232, 237-8.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 78-87.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* 249-50.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* 259, 264.

He refused to give the aid of police in the collection of tithes: their duty was to keep the peace; and when it was sought to have his action declared illegal, even the House of Lords was unable to pronounce against him.<sup>1</sup> The landlords were as enraged as the parsons when they were refused the police in serving processes and recovering rent. They were disgusted when they found their cry for Coercion remained unheeded. And the Tipperary magistrates, who joined loudly in their cry, because of a recent murder in their midst, were horrified when Drummond told them that "property has its duties as well as its rights; to the neglect of these duties in times past is mainly to be ascribed that diseased state of society in which such crimes take their rise, and it is not in the enactment or enforcement of statutes of extraordinary severity, but chiefly in the better and more faithful performance of these duties, and the more enlightened and humane exercise of these rights, that a permanent remedy for such diseases is to be sought."<sup>2</sup>

This policy of justice and conciliation was assailed in both Houses of Parliament in 1837, and an attempt was made to exhibit Colonel Verner as a martyr to liberty and conviction. But a Select Committee had already, in 1835, inquired into the character and objects of the Orange Society, and had discovered that efforts were being made to spread the organization throughout Great Britain; that wherever it appeared it had stirred up sectarian rancour;<sup>3</sup> worst of all, its chief emissary appeared to have had the design of dethroning the King and putting the Duke of Cumberland in his place. In 1836 Lord John Russell got the unanimous consent of the House to his motion asking the King to discourage the society, and all other societies of a similar character, and the King readily consented to do so.<sup>4</sup> The Orange Society of Great Britain then dissolved, the Irish one continued as a system of unaffiliated lodges, but few were ready to defend it, and even Peel with all his love for the ascendancy faction was unwilling to clasp Colonel

<sup>1</sup> O'Brien's *Life of Drummond*, pp. 223, 273.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 273-87, 284.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 183-6, 193-5.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* 216-17.



Verner to his bosom. Nor did Verner's champion in the Lords, the Earl of Roden, succeed in winning the assent of his fellow-peers, for their attack was effectually repelled by Lords Mulgrave and Melbourne.<sup>1</sup>

Two years later the attack was renewed. Lord Norbury, son of the infamous Chief-Justice, himself an inoffensive man, was murdered in Tipperary, nor could his murderers be discovered. The Tories laid the blame in Drummond's famous letter to Lord Donoughmore, and railed at the insolence of this Jack-in-office who presumed to lecture the landlords of Tipperary.<sup>2</sup> The ascendancy faction in the House of Commons was not less violent, and assailed both Drummond and O'Connell. Lord Morpeth in a closely-reasoned speech easily disposed of their charges, and O'Connell in a powerful speech covered them with ridicule and contempt, pointing them out with scorn as men who came to Parliament to vilify their native land.<sup>3</sup> The House of Lords, however, was more sympathetic, and Lord Roden had a Select Committee appointed to inquire into the state of Ireland since 1835.<sup>4</sup> Drummond's health was then indifferent, and his friends advised him to ignore the Lords' Committee. But he would face his accusers, and for seven days he was under examination. Calmly, truthfully, without an atom of passion, he gave his evidence; and when the long examination was over it was the Lords who had been vanquished, and it was Drummond who had triumphed.<sup>5</sup>

It was the last triumph of his life. His constitution had never been very strong, and serious inroads had been made on it by the constant personal attention to every detail of Irish administration. But not only did he fight the Orangemen and the Ribbonmen, and jealously watch the tithe-proctor and the landlord; he also studied the question of Irish poverty, and sought for it a permanent remedy.

In 1836 a Royal Commission, of which he was a member,

<sup>1</sup> O'Brien's *Life of Drummond*, pp. 268-9.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 321-2.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 322-7.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* 327-34.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* 339-54.

was appointed to consider the means of establishing railway communication throughout Ireland, and two years later it issued its report.<sup>1</sup> Seeing the vast numbers of the Irish who were ever on the verge of famine, without either land or labour to sustain them, Drummond foresaw that a crisis would arise with which the Poor Law would be unable to cope. In the Commission Report, largely written by him, he suggested that public works such as the reclamation of waste lands should be set on foot, and further that railways should be built. To carry out this last recommendation Lord Morpeth, in 1837, introduced a Bill to expend £2,500,000 in the building of Irish railways, to be managed and owned by the State. But the Tories defeated the measure, to the annoyance of Drummond, every moment of whose spare time the Railway Commission had absorbed, and the work of which certainly shortened his days. His health failing early in 1840, he took a short vacation, but he quickly returned to his work, and continued working till his strength was gone. In April a throat affection came on, peritonitis supervened, and on the 15th of April, before most of the people had been made aware of his illness, Drummond breathed his last. Just before the closing scene his physician asked where he wished to be buried, and the dying statesman murmured: "I wish to be buried in Ireland, the country of my adoption, a country which I loved, which I have faithfully served, and for which I believe I have sacrificed my life."<sup>2</sup>

In the presence of death the strident notes of faction were at last hushed; even his bitterest enemies spoke of him with respect; and the Press of all shades of opinion unanimously declared that the world had lost one of its great men. The Irish peasant, so long accustomed to see an enemy at Dublin Castle, regarded him with something like affectionate awe. O'Connell mingled with the mourners who followed his remains to Mount Jerome. A people to whom his memory is still dear were determined that their gratitude should take concrete form, and the sculptured figure of Drummond stands in the

<sup>1</sup> O'Brien's *Life of Drummond*, pp. 289-314.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* iii. 54-55; Greville, iv. 30-31.



Dublin City Hall with those of Lucas and Grattan and O'Connell. And surely it would have been well for the good name of England had she sent across the Channel many other administrators like this great and just man, who was at once a blessing to Ireland and a glory and an honour to his own beloved Scotland.

His death hastened the dissolution of the Lichfield House Compact. In England that Compact had never been popular. It was denounced by the *Times*<sup>1</sup> and the Tories; it was disliked even by the Whigs, who socially ostracized O'Connell.<sup>2</sup> In Ireland Drummond's administration had the warm approval of the people, but they were disappointed at the little done for them in Parliament. The Poor Law Act was disliked by many, the Municipal Act by all, and Dr. MacHale wanted the abolition rather than the commutation of tithes.<sup>3</sup> O'Connell, in 1838, had refused the Irish Mastership of the Rolls—"he had not the heart to desert Ireland";<sup>4</sup> but Dr. MacHale wished him to desert the Whigs and adopt a policy of independent opposition.<sup>5</sup> The great agitator became depressed. His wife died in 1836; the next year he was worried with election petitions, set on foot for the purpose of annoying and impoverishing him by a rich Tory clique in England nicknamed the Spottiswoode Gang.<sup>6</sup> Dr. MacHale's disapproval so added to his chagrin that he complained of having lost the confidence of his countrymen, declared he was miserably unhappy, and talked of retiring from public life and ending his days at Clongowes Wood College.<sup>7</sup> This melancholy mood soon passed away, and he continued to support the Whigs as long as they remained in office. But this was not for long. In 1835 in

<sup>1</sup> M'Donagh's *O'Connell*, pp. 254-6, 280-83, 380-84.

<sup>2</sup> *Melbourne's Memoirs*, ii. 119-20. "The support of O'Connell was fatal to the English Whigs with the English Protestant middle classes" (Thursfield's *Peel*, p. 160).

<sup>3</sup> *O'Connell's Correspondence*, ii. 91-96.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 143-4; *Melbourne*, ii. 256-7.

<sup>5</sup> *O'Connell's Correspondence*, pp. 164, 173-5.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* iii. 54-55; *Greville*, iv. 30-31.

<sup>7</sup> *O'Connell's Correspondence*, ii. 193-7.

alliance with the Irish they had a good working majority. At the General Election in 1837, which followed the death of King William and the accession of Victoria, the Irish maintained their strength, but the Whigs lost ground; the loss of several by-elections still further weakened them, and two years later they felt unable to continue in office.<sup>1</sup>

Melbourne was then succeeded by Peel, but the latter quarrelled with the Queen about the ladies of her household, and Melbourne returned to office.<sup>2</sup> The following year Melbourne was defeated on a question of Irish registration.<sup>3</sup> The next year (1841) he was repeatedly defeated on the same question, and when these reverses were followed by a still greater defeat on the sugar duties, and this latter by a defeat on a motion of want of confidence, Melbourne dissolved, and having been beaten at the polls, Peel took office.

After six years the Whigs were out and the Tories in, and the Lichfield House Compact was at an end.

<sup>1</sup> *Greville's Memoirs*, iv. 209-12.

<sup>2</sup> *O'Connell's Correspondence*, ii. 177-8; *Melbourne's Memoirs*, ii. 300-306.

<sup>3</sup> *O'Connell's Correspondence*, ii. 327-8.



## CHAPTER VII

### *The Repeal Agitation*

NO part of Ireland was more vehemently opposed to the Union than Dublin, and this without distinction of creed. The Catholics were indignant that even some of their co-religionists supported the measure, and in January 1800 an exclusively Catholic meeting was held in Dublin, at which strong language was used. O'Connell declared, amid the rapturous applause of the whole assembly, that even if Emancipation followed a Union, and was its price, the Catholics would spurn it; that if the alternative were offered them of a Union or the re-enactment of the Penal Code, they would select the latter; that they would prefer to confide in the justice of the Protestants of Ireland, who had already liberated them, than lay their country at the feet of foreigners.<sup>1</sup> This was good political strategy, likely to bring Protestants and Catholics together in defence of Irish liberty. O'Connell knew well that no Parliament, English or Irish, would dare to re-enact the Penal Code; and it was his conviction through life that the Union was an evil for Ireland, and that under an Irish Parliament, even with all its corruption and all its bigotry, Ireland would be more prosperous than under any Parliament sitting in England. He regarded the abolition of the Irish Parliament as the extinction of Ireland's separate national existence; he was maddened at hearing the bells of St. Patrick's Church ring out a peal of gladness when the Act of Union became law; and he vowed that the work then done should, if it lay in his power, be undone.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *O'Connell's Speeches*, i. 8-9.

<sup>2</sup> Dunlop's *O'Connell*, p. 19.

For the time, however, he was powerless ; the Union was passed, and no one was found to demand its repeal. But when an aggregate meeting of Dublin citizens made such a demand in 1810, O'Connell attended and spoke eloquently, describing the means by which the Union was passed in vigorous terms.<sup>1</sup> Three years later, when Peel was attacking the Catholic Board, O'Connell's consolation was that their violence would advance the cause of Repeal ; and when the long struggle for Emancipation was over in 1829, he again rejoiced that with the settlement of the Catholic question the time had come to begin in earnest the struggle for popular rights, by which he meant the struggle for Repeal.<sup>2</sup>

During the second Clare Election he attacked the disfranchisement of the 40s. freeholders, the Grand Jury jobbery in the counties, the partial administration of the law, the iniquities of the Church establishment. After the election, he passed to the greater question of the Union, and in speech after speech throughout Ireland he announced that his great object was to repeal that accursed measure, which had degraded Ireland to the rank of a province, and made her "a dependent upon British aristocracy, British intrigue and British interests." In these speeches, and in a series of public letters written in the autumn and winter of the same year, he asked the assistance of all Irishmen, without distinction of creed—the Orangemen, the Methodist, the "unpresuming Quaker"—and he was confident that with such unity the Union must be repealed. The response of the Catholics was prompt, but the Orangemen were not to be persuaded. Disgusted with Emancipation because it had placed the Catholics, even in theory, on a level with themselves, they still continued their party processions and provocative speeches ; and the Catholics resenting these insults, there were throughout Ireland many collisions between the opposing parties, with consequent loss of lives.<sup>3</sup>

Outside the Orange lodges there were Protestants who

<sup>1</sup> *Speeches*, i. 17-24.

<sup>2</sup> Dunlop, p. 222.

<sup>3</sup> *Annual Register for 1829*, pp. 125-7, 129-31 ; M'Donagh's *O'Connell*, pp. 207-9.



disliked the Union ; but there were few who wished to place themselves under a Catholic leader. The majority thought that the success of the Repeal movement under O'Connell would mean the establishment of a Catholic ascendancy ; enough, they thought, had been done for the Catholics by the concession of Emancipation, and all further Catholic demands ought to be strictly resisted. It was this view which found favour with the Government, and one after another of O'Connell's associations were proclaimed. The Society for the Improvement of Ireland, The Friends of Ireland of all Religious Denominations, The Irish Society for Legal and Legislative Relief, The Irish Volunteers of 1782 followed each other in rapid succession in 1830 ; but the existence of each was cut short by a Viceregal proclamation. And when the Tories were succeeded by the Whigs in the last days of the year, the policy of suppression was continued. Indeed, the Whig Chief-Secretary, Stanley, was a far more determined coercionist, as well as being a far abler man, than his predecessors. In 1831 he had proclaimed O'Connell's new Association "to prevent unlawful meetings," and when the Irish leader invited his friends to a series of public dinners at Holmes's Hotel in Dublin, the result was the proclamation of the dinners and the prosecution of himself.<sup>1</sup> His further attempts in the same year to promote a repeal agitation were frustrated by the suppression of "The National and Political Union" and then "The Trades Political Union" ;<sup>2</sup> and for his support of the Whigs and the Reform Bill his only reward was the Coercion Act of 1833, the most savage enactment of the kind since the Union was passed.

But in spite of the opposition of the Orangemen, the distrust of the Protestants, and the prosecutions of the Government, the Repeal movement gained strength, and at the General Election in the end of 1832, no less than 40 Repealers were returned to Parliament. O'Connell's three sons and his two sons-in-law were elected. These were often

<sup>1</sup> *John O'Connell's Recollections*, i. 64-66.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 308-11 ; Shaw Lefevre's *Peel and O'Connell*, pp. 124-5.

called his "Household Brigade"; the whole party following him was derisively called by the *Dublin Evening Post* "O'Connell's Tail," a term which soon obtained currency not only in Ireland but in Great Britain.<sup>1</sup>

If we except Shiel, the various members, the joints in the Tail as they were described, gave little evidence of any remarkable talent, and O'Connell easily towered above them all. Some of them were hard to manage, and not always reliable, and one of them, Fergus O'Connor, it was especially difficult to restrain. A landlord with little property, a barrister with little practice, with no political record, and no influential political connexions, and with little of the world's wealth, he yet succeeded in carrying the county of Cork against the most powerful territorial influence. He carried it by his audacity, by his dexterity in handling the voters, by a certain rude and wild eloquence, which especially appealed to the mob.<sup>2</sup> Naturally vain, his successes made him presumptuous; he mistook his fluency before the mob for the eloquence of statesmanship; disdained to play a secondary part even to O'Connell, and aspired to become himself the leader of the Repeal movement. In the session of 1833 he insisted that the question must be at once brought before Parliament. O'Connell said that the time was inopportune, that Repeal had yet made little progress in Great Britain and none at all in Parliament; but O'Connor would not be persuaded, and was not without support among the newly-elected members. A compromise was effected under which O'Connell himself was to move in the session of 1834<sup>3</sup> for a Select Committee "to inquire and report on the means by which the dissolution of the Parliament of Ireland was effected, on the effects of that measure upon Ireland, and on the probable consequences of continuing the legislative union between both countries."

His speech took nearly six hours in delivery, and in the early portion, in which he went over Irish history previous to

<sup>1</sup> Madden's *Ireland and its Rulers*, i. 230-31.

<sup>2</sup> *John O'Connell's Recollections*, i. 24-26; Madden, i. 174-84.

<sup>3</sup> Madden, i. 210-11.



1782, he was dry, wearisome and prolix. He had not much difficulty in showing that Ireland prospered from 1782 to 1800, even under a corrupt Parliament, nor had he in describing the infamous means by which the Union was passed. He was here going over well-trodden ground. Everything that could be said had been said during the Union debates, and in O'Connell's treatment of the subject there was nothing new. In going over the period since the Union, he was able by appealing to actual events to test the value of the prophecies made in 1800. Instead of the measure having given Ireland equal laws with England, he pointed out that for twenty out of the thirty-four years the Constitution had been suspended. The Union had increased absenteeism; it had increased taxation; it had made Ireland poorer, without enriching England; it had made her discontented and disaffected, and was yearly driving thousands of her children from her shores. The speech throughout was sober, temperate, argumentative—a carefully reasoned appeal to reasonable men. Shiel and Fergus O'Connor and others of the Repealers also spoke, but in no way strengthened the case made by O'Connell. An Irishman, Mr. Spring Rice, spoke officially for the Government, and in a speech as long as O'Connell's and not inferior in ability; Peel spoke for the Tories; but Whig and Tory joined in resisting the motion, and when the division took place there were but 38 for Repeal, while 523 were on the opposite side. Only one English member voted in the minority—Mr. Kennedy, who sat for Tiverton.<sup>1</sup>

While not expecting that his motion would have passed, O'Connell was so disappointed at the little support he received that he never again brought the question of Repeal before Parliament. And if Parliament had seriously taken in hand the various Irish grievances which clamoured loudly for redress, he would have ceased to agitate Repeal outside. "The people of Ireland," said Dr. MacHale, "do not care

<sup>1</sup> *O'Connell's Speeches*, edited by Miss Cusack, i. 366, 451; *Two Centuries of Irish History*, pp. 329-30; *John O'Connell's Recollections*, i. 81-96.

if the Parliament was in the moon provided they were well governed." <sup>1</sup> O'Connell knew this to be true; but he remembered the delay in granting Emancipation, and he could see that the British Parliament took little interest in Ireland and cared little for her wrongs. He was willing, however, to try what a professedly friendly Government could do, and for this reason he became a party to the Lichfield House Compact. The experiment was not very successful. Drummond's genius indeed did much for Irish administration; but five years' support of a Liberal Government brought Ireland nothing in enactments except the Tithes Commutation Act, the Poor Law Act and the Municipal Reform Act. Nor was it possible to get more from a hostile House of Lords, a strong Conservative opposition and a Liberal majority, in great part secretly insincere, and at best but lukewarm.

There were many who thought that O'Connell's close alliance with the Whigs was a mistake; that a more independent course would have produced better results; that a leader commanding since 1837 no less than 73 votes, and on whom the very existence of the Government depended, ought to have got substantial benefits for Ireland. But O'Connell clung tenaciously to the alliance, pleased that Drummond kept the Orangemen down, and that high legal offices were given to men with popular sympathies; and though he had himself refused the office of Master of the Rolls, he had got offices for some of his relatives and friends. Favours of this kind, however, were of no use to Ireland, and in 1839 Dr. MacHale advised O'Connell to break with the Whigs, and it was evident that the country was with MacHale.<sup>2</sup> At last O'Connell changed. Melbourne's Government was plainly tending towards dissolution; the Conservatives were plainly gaining ground and would soon come into office, to favour the Orangemen and resist reform; and once again O'Connell raised the standard of Repeal. In 1838 he had founded the Precursor's Society, to obtain corporate reform

<sup>1</sup> *Letters*, p. 324.

<sup>2</sup> *Correspondence of O'Connell*, ii. 164, 195.



and the extension of the franchise,<sup>1</sup> and in 1840, despairing of the Whigs, he founded the Loyal National Repeal Association.

While not engaged in Parliament or following his beagles for a short vacation over the mountains of Kerry, he was in Dublin, and week after week he attended Repeal meetings in the Repeal Rooms in Burgh Quay. As was his wont, he spoke eloquently and well, with all the old power of his wonderful voice, with flashes of humour lighting up his subject as he went along. He spoke of what Grattan's Parliament had done for Ireland, of the shameful means by which the Union was passed, of the miseries that had followed. He reminded his hearers that, when the majority in the British Parliament had voted down his Repeal motion in 1834, they had solemnly promised "to apply their best attention to the removal of all just causes of complaint, and to the promotion of all well-considered measures of improvement for the benefit of Ireland."<sup>2</sup> And he pointed out how even the Whigs had not carried out their promises. And now the Tories were in power. Lord de Grey was Viceroy, Lord Elliott was Chief Secretary, and an Englishman, Sir Edward Sugden, had been imported to fill the office of Lord Chancellor, and all these were enemies of the people.

But the new Association made little progress. O'Connell spoke the truth—he spoke as a great orator and a great Irishman, as the leader who had won Emancipation—but it seemed as if he spoke to a nation that would not heed, and was reluctant even to listen. The clergy on whom he so much relied were displeased with him, and did not care to follow him, for they wanted the abolition of tithes; and O'Connell had merely changed the payment from the parson to the landlord. The Bar, anxious for promotion, avoided an Association condemned by Government. The Catholic gentry, wanting favours and places and honours, would not break with Dublin Castle. The merchants held aloof, seeing

<sup>1</sup> *O'Connell's Correspondence*, ii. 149-50.

<sup>2</sup> *Duffy's Young Ireland*, p. 12.

no prospect in a renewal of agitation. The Orangemen were of course hostile, the Liberal Protestants distrustful. The Ulster Presbyterians under Sharman Crawford favoured a federal Home Rule and land reform, but thought that Repeal would involve separation from England. The Press of England of all shades was personally hostile to O'Connell. Even the National Press of Ireland was timid and nerveless. The masses of the people, remembering how O'Connell had abandoned the former agitation for Repeal in 1835, thought that a renewal of the agitation would be only the prelude to another collapse.<sup>1</sup> On every side there was doubt, hesitation, apathy and indifference. The voice of the great leader could charm no longer, and to such extent had the Whigs gained ground in Ireland, and to such extent had the cause of Repeal receded, that, in the General Election of 1841, only 12 Repealers were returned to Parliament.<sup>2</sup> Yet this wonderful old man of sixty-six did not despair in the midst of so much depression and gloom. Patiently, perseveringly, with grim tenacity and inflexible will, he continued his efforts—exhorting, arguing, convincing, strengthening the weak, encouraging the timid, confirming the strong, restraining the impetuous, assailing the enemy—never doubting that he would succeed; that when the people saw he was in earnest, a mighty Association would arise which would ensure the triumph of Repeal.

At last his patience was rewarded. In the autumn of 1842 three remarkable young men joined the Repeal Association and often attended its sparsely-attended meetings. These were Thomas Osborne Davis, John Blake Dillon and Charles Gavan Duffy. Davis and Dillon were barristers, but with little practice. Duffy had been assistant editor of a Dublin paper, and still later editor of a paper in Belfast. Davis was the oldest, and was but twenty-eight years of age, having been born in Mallow; Dillon was from Connaught;

<sup>1</sup> Duffy's *Young Ireland*, chap. i.; *John O'Connell's Recollections*, i. 313-14; ii. 6-7.

<sup>2</sup> *Two Centuries of Irish History*, p. 377.



Duffy an Ulsterman. The two latter were Catholics ; Davis was a Protestant, and in intellectual power, in force of character, in capacity for leadership, he was the ablest of the three. He was a poet, a philosopher, a historian, a man who had read much and thought much, tolerant, kindly, forbearing, with broad human sympathies and a passionate love for Ireland. Duffy had much of the practical good sense of his native Ulster—fine natural talents and a considerable power of literary expression. In this latter respect Dillon was his inferior, though his intellect was of a very high order. His motives were of the purest, his nature without guile, his ambition only to serve Ireland. The sufferings of his poorer countrymen went to his heart, and he longed to strike down the power which oppressed them. No more lovable character, none more respected, none more unselfish or courageous appeared in the public life of his time. All three — Davis especially — had profound admiration for O'Connell. But they disapproved of some of his methods and of some of his policy, of his partiality for the Whigs, of his personal dislike for the Tories,—especially for Wellington and Peel,—of his habit of grossly flattering his friends, and of his unmeasured abuse of those who for the moment were his opponents. Equally distrustful of both English parties, these young men—the Young Irelanders, as they came to be called—favoured more toleration in Ireland, so that by conciliation and forbearance all Irishmen might act together in demanding their rights from England, and not in the whining language of a beggar but in the manlier accents of the freeman. They wanted Irishmen to cultivate self-respect and self-reliance, to take a pride in their past, to recall the far distant times when Ireland was the School of the West, to learn the lesson that by disunion they had lost and by union everything could be won.

To give utterance to these thoughts a newspaper was necessary, and in the summer of 1842 Davis, Dillon and Duffy, under the shelter of an elm tree in the Phoenix Park, determined to found a newspaper. Duffy was named

its editor, and the first number of the *Nation* was published in October 1842. Its motto was "to create and foster public opinion in Ireland and make it racy of the soil." Its vigour and freshness of style, its thoughtfulness, its manly tone were new in Irish journalism. From its pages thousands of Irishmen learned for the first time of Columbkille and Columbanus, of Duns Scotus and Erigena, of Bangor and Lismore. They were able to follow in the footsteps of the Wild Geese, to see Sarsfield fall at Landen, Mahony hold Cremona, and Lally charge at Fontenoy; or again to sit with Colgan in his study at Louvain. They learned something of Irish music, of Irish eloquence, of Irish valour; they learned to interpret the rath and dun, the broken arch and the ivy-clad ruin. And learning so much, they lifted up their heads and were proud of the land in which they were born. To the young men especially the new paper appealed, and in the University, in Maynooth, in the colleges and schools, it was welcomed with enthusiasm. In the country towns, in the farmers' homes it was read; and by the light of the village forge the smith paused from his anvil, and the villagers gathered round, while some one read out from the columns of the newly-arrived *Nation* its tales, its historical sketches, its stirring appeals. The *Times* and *Quarterly Review* recognized its literary ability. Irish exiles abroad sent their congratulations, foreign newspapers bade it welcome, and its articles were copied into the American newspapers all over the United States. Under its influence the Repeal Association grew rapidly, its meetings full, its weekly rent coming in by hundreds of pounds, and thus did a newspaper succeed where even the great agitator so far had failed.<sup>1</sup>

In the meantime O'Connell had been Lord Mayor of Dublin. The Corporation long manned by Orangemen had been radically changed by the Municipal Corporation Act of 1840, and in the end of 1841 O'Connell was elected Lord Mayor, the first Catholic who held the office since the days of James II. He declared that while in the Chair no one would

<sup>1</sup> *Young Ireland*, chap. i. 3, 5.



know his politics ; but when his year of office expired this attitude was abandoned, and in February 1843, as Alderman O'Connell, he brought forward in the Corporation a motion for Repeal. In a long speech occupying a whole day he was able to show that Ireland had a right to a native legislative, that this had been proved by the transactions of 1782, that the Union was not a valid contract and had brought disastrous results on Ireland, and that it could and ought to be abolished by peaceable and constitutional means. He had traversed this ground so often before that he was expected to be dry and uninteresting. But the power of a great orator and statesman asserted itself ; he was neither dry nor tedious, and in freshness and vigour and convincing force the speech was one of the greatest of his life. Mr. Butt, a very able lawyer and very persuasive speaker, replied for the Opposition, but O'Connell's motion was carried, and the once Orange Corporation of Dublin resolved by 45 to 15 votes to petition Parliament for Repeal.<sup>1</sup>

These proceedings greatly helped the Repeal movement, and the Repeal rent, which during 1842 did not exceed £100 a week, rose to more than £300 in the end of February 1843, advanced to nearly £700 by the end of April, and before the end of May as much as £2200 was received in a single week.<sup>2</sup>

From the beginning the Secretary of the Association was Mr. Ray—a man of methodical and orderly habits, with great powers of initiative and superintendence, and capable of attending to a great organization in all its details. There were General, Finance and Parliamentary Committees and various Sub-Committees ; there were Repeal wardens in each parish, and there were three Repeal inspectors, one for each of the three southern provinces ; and the clerical work of the Central Office at one time required the continued assistance of a staff of sixty clerks. The Association consisted of associates who paid 1s. a year, members who paid £1, and volunteers who paid £10 themselves, or had that amount paid by others.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Young Ireland*, chap. vi. ; *John O'Connell's Recollections*, ii. 223-34.

<sup>2</sup> *Nation* newspaper.

<sup>3</sup> *Halliday Pamphlets*, p. 1917 ; Attorney-General's *Speech*, January 1844.

Dublin was from the outset the great stronghold of Repeal; but there were also Repealers all over the country, as well as in England and America, and after O'Connell's great speech at the Corporation the weekly meetings were always filled to overflowing. But O'Connell was not yet satisfied. He asked in the beginning of 1843 for 3,000,000 Repealers, and declared that with this number he would certainly carry Repeal;<sup>1</sup> and to spread the organization and give him the numbers he required, monster meetings were held all over Ireland in 1843.

The first of these was at Trim in March, the last in October at Mullaghmast, and between these dates nearly thirty meetings had been held. O'Connell himself usually attended. He declared he had lost confidence in the British Parliament as being unable to do justice to Ireland, and during the session of 1843 he kept away from London and devoted all his energies to the work of agitation at home. The priests were everywhere his organizers and assistants; the bishops, with the exception of Dr. Murray of Dublin and a few others, were also with him, and often attended his meetings. Not a few of the gentry also joined him, and the masses came from far and near to see the great agitator and hear the voice which to them was so dear. It was calculated that 100,000 attended the Repeal meeting at Mullingar in May; in the same month 500,000 attended the meeting at Cork; in June there were 300,000 at Kilkenny and 400,000 at Mallow, and in August nearly a million attended the great meeting at Tara.<sup>2</sup> These immense gatherings were under the most perfect control, listened patiently to the speakers and rapturously applauded O'Connell, and willingly acted on his advice to shun violence and outrage. Neither in going to the meetings nor in returning from them were there excesses; there was no outrage or crime, no drunkenness or disorder. Much of this was due to the Temperance movement, lately started by Father Mathew of Cork. Without great learning or eloquence this simple priest had preached the evils of intemperance with such effect that two millions of Irishmen

<sup>1</sup> *Nation*.

<sup>2</sup> *John O'Connell's Recollections*, ii. 238-40.



had taken his total abstinence pledge. Brewers and distillers suffered severely, public-houses were closed, crime diminished, and for the first time vast masses of men came together and separated without lawlessness or disorder. These teetotallers with their bands and banners marched to the Repeal meetings and acted as O'Connell's policemen, and to them in large measure it was due that such discipline and order prevailed.

The Government were perplexed. A Repeal Association such as that of 1842, whose members were few and whose meetings did not attract more than a few thousands, might be ignored, no matter how eloquent might be its leader, or how convincing the case he made ; but an Association which counted its members by millions, and whose meetings were attended by hundreds of thousands, with such a newspaper as the *Nation* as its organ, and with such a leader as O'Connell, was too formidable to be neglected. The friends of the Union, recollecting how Peel had surrendered to agitation in 1829, dreaded that once again there might be a similar surrender, and in May Lord Roden asked in Parliament what the Government intended to do. Peel answered that he recognized the Repeal movement as a menace and an evil ; that to maintain the Union he would use every resource placed in his hands by law, and if necessary seek for new and extraordinary powers ; and he added that if any member from Ireland demanded Repeal, he would resist the demand even at the cost of civil war.<sup>1</sup> This strong language was followed up by vigorous action. The Arms Act, which was about to expire, was re-enacted with new and more stringent provisions, and the clauses prescribing domiciliary visits, on suspicion that arms were concealed, left the people at the mercy of Orange magistrates and the caprice of over-zealous police officials. The Irish Lord Chancellor undertook to declare that the Repeal Association was unlawful, and O'Connell and his son, Lord French and several members of Parliament were deprived of the Commission of the Peace because they had attended Repeal meetings.<sup>2</sup> All this, however, did not end the Repeal agitation or the troubles of the

<sup>1</sup> *Young Ireland*, pp. 82-84.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 93.

Government. Even in the absence of O'Connell from Parliament the Arms Bill encountered fierce opposition. Mr. Shiel, Mr. Sharman Crawford, Lord Clements (heir to the earldom of Leitrim), aided by the English Radicals, opposed its second reading, fought it in Committee, clause by clause and line by line; and so prolonged and bitter was their opposition that nearly the whole session was wasted in having the measure passed into law.<sup>1</sup> The action of the Lord Chancellor found few defenders even among his own party. It was condemned by the Liberal leader, Lord John Russell; it was denounced by the Radicals and Irish Whigs; and as a protest Mr. Smith O'Brien, M.P. for Clare, Mr. Grattan, M.P. for Meath, Sir Richard Musgrave, Lord Cloncurry and many others resigned the Commission of the Peace. At public meetings O'Connell assailed the Lord Chancellor with unmeasured invective. He was an Englishman named Sugden, and O'Connell asked, amid the cheers and laughter of his audience, would any of them call a decent-looking pig by the name of Sugden?<sup>2</sup> To settle disputes that might arise among the people he established Courts of Arbitration, presided over by those who had been dismissed from or had resigned the Commission of the Peace, and under his advice these Courts were frequented and the ordinary Courts of Law shunned.

Nor did he cease to agitate Repeal. On the contrary, his language grew bolder and more defiant. Knowing that to discuss Repeal and petition Parliament were perfectly legal, and that no disorder had followed any Repeal meeting, he knew that a mere declaration of Peel was not law, and therefore he felt on safe ground when he attacked him. He had conquered him in 1829; he would conquer him now and make 1843 the Repeal year. It was true, public opinion in England was with the Ministry; but in France Ireland had many and powerful friends, and in the United States public meetings had been held, at which the leading public men had used words of warm friendship for Ireland and words of menace towards England.<sup>3</sup> O'Connell told Wellington and Peel that he was leader of

<sup>1</sup> *Young Ireland*, pp. 99-101.    <sup>2</sup> *Nation*.    <sup>3</sup> *Young Ireland*, pp. 116-19.



8,000,000 men, and could not be put down ;<sup>1</sup> he reminded them that a large proportion of the army were Irish and would not fight against their own country ; and that large numbers of Irish in England would strike back if Ireland were wantonly assailed. If all the Repealers were trained they would be strong enough to conquer Europe. Yet he would cling to the Constitution as long as there was a rag of it left to cover him ; he would assist no enemy of the Constitution, he would break no law ; but if he were wantonly and illegally assailed he would not tamely submit ; and if his enemies trampled on him it would be on his dead body, not on the living man.<sup>2</sup> The better to rouse his countrymen he held his Repeal meetings on historic ground. At Tara he recalled Ireland's ancient glory, for he stood where Irish kings once ruled ; at Kilkenny he spoke of the butcheries of Cromwell ; and at Mullaghmast, of the treacherous murder of so many Irish chiefs. Meanwhile the young men of the *Nation* newspaper poured forth defiance in impassioned song,<sup>3</sup> and meanwhile also the Ministry refused in Parliament a motion of Smith O'Brien to inquire into the state of Ireland. Instead of concession there was to be coercion. Troops were poured into Ireland, barracks were fortified, strategic positions occupied by the army as if war was to be begun. Once again, as in 1829, Peel and O'Connell stood facing each other in anger and menace, but on this occasion events shaped themselves differently, for the victory was with Peel.

On Sunday the 8th of October the last monster meeting of the year was to be held at Clontarf. The battle-ground where Brian smote the Danes had been appropriately selected by O'Connell to hurl fresh defiance at his foes, and announce to his friends the speedy triumph of Repeal. But on Saturday the Government proclaimed the meeting, declaring that if attempted to be held it would be dispersed by force. Large bodies of troops occupied the neighbouring heights, the artillery was turned on the meeting-place, and the guns of the Pigeon House Fort swept the approaches from Dublin. O'Connell's

<sup>1</sup> *Young Ireland*, pp. 82, 91.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 101.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 104-5.

position was perplexing. Had he not intended to offer resistance to Peel's attack he had no right to indulge in language of defiance, leaving the people under the impression that they must repel force by force. And on the other hand, had his language of defiance been sincere, he should have taught the people to be prepared. The fact was that he counted on a repetition of the events of 1829, forgetting that at that date England was divided on the Catholic question, while it was now united on the question of Repeal. His calculations were at fault, and he found himself in a position where he could neither advance without danger nor retreat without humiliation. There were many who thought he ought to have advanced. Legally he was entitled to hold his meeting, and, if interfered with, he could have tested the value of the Government proclamation in the Courts of Law. Even if the Government had contemplated massacre, only a few thousands, perhaps only a few hundreds, would have fallen—in which case the whole world would have cried shame on England; the English party, which favoured Concession though stopping short of Repeal, would have become all-powerful; and Peel and his Government would have been hurled from power. Had O'Connell himself fallen he would have fallen with honour, and the massacre of Clontarf would, in part at least, have prevented the horrors of the great famine. Such results, however, were out of the question with O'Connell as leader. He had a horror of violence, and thought that the greatest blessings of human liberty were not worth the shedding of a drop of blood, and he gave instant orders that the Government proclamation was to be obeyed. All through the night his messengers travelled, turning back those who were advancing to Clontarf, and when morning dawned it was the soldiers alone who held possession of the ancient battle-field.<sup>1</sup>

Peel followed up his victory by prosecuting for conspiracy O'Connell, his son John, Mr. Gavan Duffy; Mr. Barret, editor of the *Pilot*; Dr. Gray, editor of the *Freeman's Journal*; two priests, Father Tyrrell and Father Tracy; the Secretary

<sup>1</sup> *Young Ireland*, pp. 132-7; Mitchel's *History of Ireland*, ii. 190-91.



of the Association, Mr. Ray ; and Mr. Tom Steele. In an indictment, which was long and elaborate and in parts neither clear nor intelligible, they were charged with attempting to intimidate Parliament by a display of physical force, with exciting discontent among the people and disaffection in the army, and with bringing the Courts of Law into contempt.

The trial, which commenced in the middle of January, lasted for thirty days. The Attorney-General, Mr. Smith, and the Solicitor-General, Mr. Greene, in long and elaborate statements, examined every speech of the defendants, every article and letter in the newspapers, every ballad in the *Nation* for incriminating details. The jury was packed, so that every Catholic was excluded, and the Chief-Justice, Pennefather, forgetting that he was on the Bench, spoke as an advocate and a partisan. On O'Connell's side nothing was wanting in legal talent, and O'Connell, Shiel, Whiteside, Fitzgibbon and Henn were worthy of the Irish Bar in its palmiest days. Whiteside's speech was especially noticeable, being fully equal to the finest efforts of forensic eloquence either in Ireland or elsewhere.<sup>1</sup> But eloquence and legal skill were equally unavailing. In defending himself O'Connell preferred to address himself to the larger audience outside, which would be sure to read his speech in the newspapers. He turned with contempt from a partisan judge and a packed jury, treating both with scorn and defiance, expecting justice from neither ; and his expectations were fully justified when a grossly partisan judicial charge was followed by a verdict of guilty from the jury. A motion for a new trial was soon after made and refused ; and then, on the 30th of May 1844, the defendants were called up for sentence.<sup>2</sup>

The sentence was severe. O'Connell was to be imprisoned for twelve months, pay a fine of £2000, and give £5000 security to be of good behaviour for seven years. The other defendants were to be imprisoned for nine months, pay a fine of £50, and give security for £1000. One of O'Connell's friends in Court whispered that he was being punished for having preserved the country from civil war, and O'Connell

<sup>1</sup> *Halliday Pamphlets* (Whiteside's Speech).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 1917-18.

himself felt it his duty to tell the judges that justice had not been done. The crowds around the Court and in the streets were deeply moved and difficult to restrain; but they took O'Connell's advice, and quietly went to their homes while the prisoners were driven off to Richmond prison. They were treated with every consideration, and suffered nothing but the loss of their liberty. They had good rooms, lived with their families, dined and breakfasted together, discussed public questions without hindrance, could see and entertain visitors, and write and read whatever they pleased. By the country outside they were regarded as martyrs and heroes—public meetings were held to denounce the trial, and public prayers were offered for their release, and especially for the safety of O'Connell.<sup>1</sup>

It seemed useless to appeal to the House of Lords, yet it was done, and in September the appeal was heard. The ex-Attorney-General for England, Sir Thomas Wilde, led for O'Connell, the Tory Attorney-General for the Crown. The highest legal talent was engaged on both sides, and after the case had been fully argued, the Lords, by three to two, reversed the judgment of the Irish Court. The manner in which the jury had been empannelled was specially condemned by the Lord Chief-Justice, Lord Denman, who declared that if such fraudulent practices were allowed to pass, trial by jury would be "a delusion, a mockery and a snare."<sup>2</sup>

On the 14th of September, amid a scene of wild enthusiasm, O'Connell left the prison. Seated on a triumphal car, drawn by six white horses, he made his journey through the streets, followed by the Lord Mayor and Corporation, and by the Committee of the Repeal Association, and by ordered masses of men (some in vehicles, some on horseback, some on foot)—a crowd which stretched back for six miles, and was computed to number 200,000 men. All over the country bonfires blazed upon the hills, bands played, houses were illuminated, the streets were filled with cheering crowds intoxicated with joy

<sup>1</sup> *Young Ireland*, pp. 174-83.

<sup>2</sup> *Halliday Pamphlets* (Lord Denman's Judgment).



because of the deliverance of the great chief who had led them so ably and so long.<sup>1</sup>

O'Connell found that the Repeal Association had suffered nothing in his absence. When the Lord Chancellor had superseded the Repeal magistrates there were many important accessions to Repeal; among them Sir Coleman O'Loughlin, Sir Francis Brady, MacNevin, and Thomas O'Hagan, afterwards Lord Chancellor;<sup>2</sup> and fresh accessions had also come with the Government prosecutions, among them a brilliant Englishman, Frederick Lucas, and Mr. Smith O'Brien, M.P. for Clare. The latter, a descendant of the ancient Thomond Kings, was a Protestant and a Whig, and had opposed O'Connell in 1828, when he was elected for Clare. He was not an orator, but he had considerable ability, was cool and cautious, full of courage and resolution, and always ready to follow where his convictions led. At O'Connell's special request he took charge of the Repeal Association while the State prisoners were at Richmond. Under his vigorous leadership registration was attended to, the conduct of members of Parliament was watched, representative positions were contested in the interests of Repeal, and Repeal reading-rooms were set up where public questions were discussed. Irish history was studied, and the prose and poetry of the *Nation* was read and admired.

To replace the old Repeal meeting-room on Burgh Quay a new and spacious room had recently been built, which O'Connell named Conciliation Hall; and when he attended the public meetings here for the first time after his release, the great hall was filled to overflowing. The anxiety to hear what he proposed for the future was great. Before Clontarf he spoke often of the invalidity of the Act of Union, and proposed to have a National Council of 300 elected, which the Queen's writ could and would change into an Irish Parliament. After Clontarf he talked of holding simultaneous meetings.<sup>3</sup> And now he said nothing of monster meetings nor simultaneous meetings, nor of the Council of 300, except as an advising

<sup>1</sup> *Young Ireland*, pp. 188-92.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 94-96.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 139.

Council, nor had he anything to propose except that the Ministry should be impeached.<sup>1</sup>

All this was disappointing, but worse followed. Mr. Sharman Crawford and other Whig friends had just declared for Federation, which meant that the legislative Union must stand, but that a subordinate assembly should be set up in Dublin to deal with purely Irish affairs. This was a decided advance on mere Whiggery, and as such was welcomed by Davis. He still favoured Repeal; believed that if both movements were kept separate, the lesser demand might be conceded when the greater would be refused, or, failing this, at least important concessions might be won. This practical policy was hampered when O'Connell, to the surprise of all, suddenly gave in his adhesion to Federation and abandoned Repeal.<sup>2</sup> He effected nothing by the sudden change. Sharman Crawford did not want his support and would not co-operate with him, and Parliament would certainly reject Federation as well as Repeal if it were advocated by O'Connell.<sup>3</sup> Nor would the younger men among the Repealers have followed him if he abandoned Repeal. In these circumstances he retraced his steps, and the Repeal Association was once more a united body. O'Connell himself pushed forward the work of registration and the establishment of Repeal reading-rooms;<sup>4</sup> and the young men of the *Nation*—the Young Irelanders as they were now called—brought out the National Library, a series of books dealing with Ireland and its history.

Yet the national cause was retrograding rather than advancing. Old age had come upon O'Connell; his vigour and energy were less, he talked no longer of monster meetings and little of Repeal, he delegated much of his authority to his son John, and *he* and the Young Irelanders could not agree. Assuming the rôle of Defender of the Faith, the younger O'Connell thought that the writings of the Young Irelanders were not sufficiently orthodox. He forgot that these young

<sup>1</sup> *Young Ireland*, pp. 198-9.

<sup>2</sup> *O'Connell's Correspondence*, ii. Appendix.

<sup>3</sup> *Young Ireland*, pp. 212-24.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* 222.



men were not all Catholics, that some of them did not perhaps understand Catholic teaching, nor make allowance for Catholic susceptibilities, and that if they gave offence it was almost certain they did not intend it ; and he ought to have remembered that in a political association nothing is so fatal as the introduction of religious controversy. O'Connell sided with his son ; the Young Irelanders, especially Davis, felt hurt, and the breach which had been opened with the discussion of Federation was widened by religious differences, and still further by other events which soon followed.<sup>1</sup>

Anxious to break up the Repeal Association, and satisfied that this could be done better by kindness and generosity than by force, Peel, in the session of 1845, introduced three measures of redress. The first was a Land Bill—meagre, grudging and unsatisfactory, but yet too much for the House of Lords, which rejected it. A second Bill, which increased the grant to Maynooth College from £9000 to £26,000, became law, and with the hearty good wishes both of the Young Irelanders and O'Connell.<sup>2</sup> It was the third measure which led to fresh disputes and divisions. This was the Act under which the Queen's Colleges were established and endowed. Peel was anxious to placate the Catholics by providing for them higher education ; but English bigotry would not allow them a share in the endowments of Trinity College, nor, failing this, give them a Catholic University ; and Peel's plan was a mixed system of education such as had been set up by Stanley for the primary schools. Three colleges were to be established—one at Belfast, one at Cork and one at Galway—and these were to be constituent colleges of the Queen's University, which came into existence in 1850. In neither college was religious teaching to be endowed ; students of all religions or of none were free to attend lectures ; there was to be no attack on any religion by professors, and no attempt at proselytism. The colleges were to be non-resident, but the religious authorities might make provision to superintend the boarding-

<sup>1</sup> *O'Connell's Correspondence*, ii. 338-40 ; *Young Ireland*, pp. 224-30.

<sup>2</sup> *O'Connell's Correspondence*, ii. 353.

houses of students of their communion, and might also provide, at their own expense, for religious instruction within the colleges.

The Young Irelanders, who were themselves of various religions and anxious to bring all Irishmen together, welcomed Peel's proposals as likely to soften religious antagonisms ; but O'Connell took an opposite view, holding strongly that education not founded on religion was worthless and even pernicious. The Catholic bishops at their meeting agreed with O'Connell. Yet they would accept Peel's proposals if they were so amended that a fair proportion of the professors in the new colleges should be Catholics ; that the bishops of each province should be visitors ; that in such subjects as philosophy and history there should be separate Catholic chairs, and that a Catholic chaplain should be appointed to superintend the religious instruction of the Catholic students.<sup>1</sup> The Government would only concede part of these demands, and then the colleges were branded by the bishops as dangerous to the faith and morals of Catholic students. Dr. MacHale, adopting the words of an English M.P., described them as a gigantic scheme of godless education ; and O'Connell, without even waiting for the Bishop's condemnation, attacked the *Nation* because it welcomed Peel's scheme, conditional, however, on its being amended. Before a crowded meeting in Conciliation Hall he turned fiercely on Davis. "There is no such party," he said, "as that styled Young Irelanders. It is time that this delusion should be put an end to. Young Ireland may play what pranks they please. I do not envy them the name they rejoice in. I shall stand by old Ireland, and I have some slight notion that old Ireland will stand by me." Davis, who felt unbounded admiration for O'Connell, was deeply hurt, and in replying burst into tears. The old chief, on his side, was profoundly touched ; there were mutual explanations and expressions of affection and goodwill ; and with the public reconciliation of Davis and O'Connell an end was put to this painful scene.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *O'Connell's Correspondence*, ii. 357-60 ; *Young Ireland*, Appendix to chap. vii.

<sup>2</sup> *Young Ireland*, pp. 249-59, 263-4.



A few months later Davis died. His illness was short, his death unexpected, his loss felt by troops of friends as a great personal sorrow. Duffy, Dillon, Mitchel, MacNevin, even the colder Smith O'Brien, loved him as a brother. Though he died young he stands high among Ireland's great men. Poet, essayist, antiquarian, historian, orator, philosopher and statesman, it would be hard to find so gifted a man. He thought deeply and clearly, had broad human sympathies, and loved every Irishman if only that Irishman loved Ireland. English by descent, though not by birth, he disliked England because she misgoverned Ireland; but his was not that blatant patriotism which finds expression in loud talk, impotent sedition and impracticable schemes. He wished to lift up Ireland without humiliating England; but if the greater country continued to oppress the weaker, then he wished all Irishmen to unite in striking England down. No man was braver, none less reckless; with the instincts of a born leader, he controlled the stormy spirits who surrounded him—chided, persuaded, restrained, preached unity, toleration and forbearance. These Young Irelanders were a brilliant band with rare talents; but jealousy hid her head in the presence of Davis, and all looked to him as their chief. His kindness, his gentleness, his modesty and mildness, his winning ways bound their hearts to him as with bonds of steel, and when he died a place was vacant among them which by no possibility could be filled. O'Connell's grief was genuine and profound. His nature was generous, his heart was warm, and in spite of recent differences he loved Davis, and was stunned at the news of his death. In the few years left to him he did not expect to see the like of Davis again, and he solemnly declared that he "never knew any man who could be so useful to Ireland in the present stage of her struggles."<sup>1</sup>

The death of their greatest and wisest man leaving the Young Irelanders without a leader to moderate or restrain, they became disgusted with O'Connell's want of vigour and decision. The intolerance of John O'Connell increased their

<sup>1</sup> *O'Connell's Correspondence*, ii. 363; *Young Ireland*, pp. 274-6.

disgust, and when the Whigs came into office in 1846, and this event was followed by a new Whig alliance and the practical abandonment of Repeal, they shook the dust of Conciliation Hall off their feet. Their secession completed the ruin of an organization already tottering to its fall, and before another year had elapsed the great Repeal Association had reached the end of its career, and was little better than a memory of what had been.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Young Ireland*, pp. 277-82; *O'Connell's Correspondence*, ii. 377-92; *Mitchel's History of Ireland*, ii. 213.



## CHAPTER VIII

### *The Famine*

IN ancient and mediæval times such famines as those which occurred in the nineteenth century were unknown in Ireland. Meat and fish, corn and vegetables, fruit and honey supplied the rich. The mass of the people lived chiefly on porridge, or stirabout (to give its modern name), a wholesome food made from oatmeal, and usually eaten with milk. The thriftless or afflicted were sometimes reduced to eating nettle-tops mixed with a little oatmeal, or perhaps water-cresses or shamrocks. These cases, however, were exceptional in a land where indigence was generously relieved and hospitality was extended to all.<sup>1</sup> The partial famines which arose during the Danish wars were caused by the Danes themselves, who plundered and spoiled and murdered, destroying the people as well as their food; and it was war also which caused the famine during the invasion of Edward Bruce.<sup>2</sup>

When Munster was desolated during the Desmond war (1580-83), and Ulster laid waste by Mountjoy in his campaigns against Tyrone, crops were intentionally destroyed, for in each case the invader invoked the aid of hunger to subdue his opponents. In a similar spirit the Cromwellian soldiers went forth with scythe and Bible, the former to cut down the ripening Papist corn lest the resistance of the Papist might be prolonged. And the famines which desolated Ireland periodically from 1725 to 1740, and with fearful consequences in the latter year, naturally resulted from the movement to consolidate farms, involving, as it did, the

<sup>1</sup> Joyce, *Social History of Ancient Ireland*, ii. 141-58, 168-73.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* vol. i.

eviction of so many people from their homes.<sup>1</sup> In no case did the calamity arise from the sudden and unexpected failure of a crop on which the people mainly relied, and which had been sown in sufficient quantity for their needs.

So far, oatmeal continued for the masses to be the staple article of diet. But in the meantime Sir Walter Raleigh, in the end of the sixteenth century, had introduced the potato from Virginia. It did not, however, become at once popular; it was not sown extensively throughout the seventeenth century, and even in the first quarter of the eighteenth century corn continued to supply food to the nation.<sup>2</sup> Eviction and famine effected a change. The miserable patches of land on which so many of the people lived, if planted with corn, could not produce sufficient food for a family, and the scanty and ill-paid labour of the occupiers would not enable them to effectually supplement their food-supply. But if potatoes were sown instead of corn, hunger might be kept from the poor man's door. Except rice, the potato is the cheapest food for sustaining human life.<sup>3</sup> The ordinary produce of an Irish acre will feed a family of eight for a year, while at least two acres planted with corn would be required.<sup>4</sup> The latter, too, was subject to tithes, but the potato was not. Under these influences it grew in favour, until in Young's time potato-culture had so completely supplanted corn, that for nine months of the year potatoes and milk were everywhere the food of the poor. The multiplication of 40s. freeholds, following the Catholic Relief Act of 1793, added enormously to the number of very small tenants, and in consequence enormously increased the number of those dependent on the potato; and when in 1845 their one resource failed, millions were face to face with hunger.

In 1740, as previously, the potatoes, not being dug up until Christmas, were overtaken by a frost of excessive severity

<sup>1</sup> Joyce, *Social History of Ancient Ireland*, vol. ii.

<sup>2</sup> O'Rorke, *History of the Great Irish Famine*, pp. 8-10.

<sup>3</sup> Walpole's *History of England*, iv. 216.

<sup>4</sup> Young's *Tour*, ii. 45-46.



and destroyed ; and this, added to insufficient tillage and want of employment, brought about the famine of that and the following year, during which a fifth of the whole population was swept away.<sup>1</sup> The famine of 1821 was caused by floods, which over large acres destroyed the growing crops.<sup>2</sup> That of the following year, complicated by disease, was even worse, and in the county of Cork alone no less than 122,000 persons were supported by charity.<sup>3</sup> In 1831 Dr. MacHale described the people of Killala as being without cattle, corn, potatoes or money ; and such was the destitution that public works had to be set on foot.<sup>4</sup> Four years later seizures for rent and tithes left the people along the western coast again destitute,<sup>5</sup> and there were partial famines throughout the country in 1836, in 1837 and again in 1842.<sup>6</sup> In 1845 the landlords were still as grasping, the laws as unjust, the Government as unsympathetic, the skies as changeable as of old. But in that year, for the first time in Ireland, the potato was attacked by a mysterious disease which, independently of landlordism or law or capricious climate, was sufficient to precipitate a national calamity.

The blight, as it came to be called, first showed itself in Germany, then in Belgium, in 1842, after which it appeared in Canada in 1844, and in the next year in Great Britain and Ireland. In the latter country it was first seen about the middle of September in Wexford.<sup>7</sup> Thence it marched with invisible tread all over the land, poisoning the peasants' potato fields with the fatal breath of the simoon. The stalks, till then green and healthy and loaded with blossoms, crumpled and withered beneath its touch ; the leaves looked as if acid had been sprinkled upon them ; the burned spots grew larger until leaves and stalks were decayed ; and the fields, lately vigorous with vegetable life, became a putrid mass of vegetable matter. When the potatoes were dug up

<sup>1</sup> O'Rorke, pp. 14-15, 24.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 30-31.

<sup>3</sup> Mitchel's *History*, ii. 154.

<sup>4</sup> *Letters*, pp. 191, 206.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* 373.

<sup>6</sup> MacHale's *Letters*, p. 559 ; *Two Centuries of Irish History*, pp. 394-5.

<sup>7</sup> O'Rorke, pp. 48-51.

it was found that the fatal disease had penetrated beneath the soil and that a large part of the crop was rotten. Worse than all, when the sound potatoes, having been separated from the unsound ones, were deposited in the pits and the pits after a time opened, it was seen that the blight had entered, and laying its awful hand on the sound potatoes, had rendered them unfit for human food. The peasant, with blanched face, saw his food thus disappear, and as he looked at his children, shivering with fear at what they saw, and as he thought of the many months before him during which the potato was his and their only resource, he was filled with terror and dismay.

During the next few months much was written and spoken about the nature of the disease, the amount of damage done, the steps necessary to save the people from perishing. The *Times* sent over a special commissioner; the Government sent two scientific experts, Professors Lindley and Playfair; police and magistrates were instructed to report to Dublin Castle; newspaper correspondents traversed the country; clergymen wrote public letters; editors wrote leading articles; and a Committee of the Dublin Corporation was formed, one of its members being O'Connell.<sup>1</sup> The cause of the disease was variously though not satisfactorily explained. The extent of the damage varied according to the district. In some districts the potatoes were all but completely destroyed, in others but little affected; but taking the country as a whole, it was calculated that at least one-half of the crop was ruined, a loss which equalled £9,000,000. This was the estimate of Professors Lindley and Playfair, and they were not disposed to exaggerate. So great a calamity could only be effectually combated by the State itself. At a meeting of the Dublin Corporation O'Connell proposed that distilling should at once be stopped, that the export of all provisions should be prohibited, that public granaries should be set up, that railways should be built, and that other reproductive works should be commenced; and that for these purposes £1,500,000 should

<sup>1</sup> O'Rorke, pp. 52-55, 59-74.



be advanced by the State on loan. These proposals having been adopted, a deputation waited on the Viceroy, Lord Heytesbury. He received them coldly, told them that inquiries were being made, that so far there was no great cause for alarm, that the Government were watchful, and that as to the proposals made, they could not be carried out without legislative sanction. Privately, however, he warned Peel that the situation was grave, and that there was danger in delay.<sup>1</sup>

The next step was with Peel. Nor could it be denied that his responsibilities were grave. He had crushed the Repeal Association, and in maintaining the Union, protested that the British Parliament was both able and willing to redress every Irish wrong. And yet, though occupying a commanding position among public men, he had done nothing to make his words good. He had resisted every reform of a hated and alien Church; he had not curbed the excessive powers of the landlords, nor improved the condition of their tenants. He had done nothing to check the division and subdivision of small holdings. He had been told by Drummond that the population of Ireland was rapidly increasing without any corresponding increase in the means of subsistence; that an urgent need was to change tens of thousands of the smaller tenants into labourers, and furnish them with employment in the building of railways and the reclamation of waste lands;<sup>2</sup> and that if this were not done a famine would surely come. But he had not heeded Drummond's warnings; he had defeated Drummond's plans; he had left the people without employment, the railways unbuilt and the waste lands unreclaimed. And now Drummond's prophecy was being fulfilled—the famine had come, and more than 8,000,000<sup>3</sup> of Irishmen were crying vainly for food.<sup>4</sup>

Nor did the Premier show any anxiety to hearken to the appeal. In spite of the Viceroy's letters and the scientific experts' reports, he refused to summon Parliament, and did not

<sup>1</sup> O'Rorke, pp. 55-58.

<sup>2</sup> Walpole, iv. 244-6.

<sup>3</sup> Exact population in 1846, 8,175,124 (*Annual Register*, p. 130).

<sup>4</sup> Drummond's *Life*, pp. 289-311.

call the Cabinet together till November. Even then he would not stop distilling, nor the export of Irish corn, nor set up public works; and he petulantly declared that the Irish had alienated the sympathy of England by their monster meetings and their support of O'Connell. What he proposed was to reduce by Order in Council the duty on imported corn, to call Parliament together at once, and then to partially repeal the Corn Laws.<sup>1</sup> But to this the Cabinet would not agree, and Peel, unable to carry his point, resigned office in December. Lord John Russell then essayed to form a Government, but failed, and Peel returned to office, having parted with his ablest colleague, Lord Stanley, who, however, was succeeded at the Colonial Office by Mr. Gladstone, a still abler man.

Peel's great difficulty was the Corn Laws. In the Tory party the landlord interest had always been strong, and the Tory squire favoured Protection, because it kept up the price of corn and enabled the farmer to pay his rent. This he selfishly considered of much more importance than to cheapen the poor man's food. Peel had favoured these views, nor was even the Liberal party as yet prepared to adopt Free Trade. But the people in the towns clamoured for cheaper food-stuffs. Manchester spoke out emphatically, and an Anti-Corn Law League was formed there. Its President was Mr. Cobden, M.P., a man of the highest character, of the purest motives, of great intellectual capacity, wielding considerable influence in Parliament, but much more beyond its walls. Under the influence of the Free Traders' propaganda, Peel's Protectionist convictions were already shaken, and in 1842 he adopted a sliding scale, making the import duty less the higher the price of corn at home. His entire abandonment of Protection was hastened by the Irish famine, and by the fact that Lord John Russell declared absolutely for Free Trade in the end of 1845, and when Parliament opened in January Peel prepared and soon carried the total repeal of the Corn Laws.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Peel's *Memoirs*, ii. 158.

<sup>2</sup> *Annual Register*, pp. 30-36, 98; Walpole's *England*, iv. 60-68, 118-22, 143-4, 174-6, 260-71.



The only other measure foreshadowed in the Queen's speech was an Irish Coercion Bill. During the winter some outrages had been committed, and because of these there was to be coercion. The English poor man's cry was hearkened to by the cheapening of his bread; the Irish poor man, whose stomach cried out for food, was to have instead the lash applied to his back. On the Corn Bill the Tory party divided. A large section, submissive to party discipline, followed Peel, but more than a hundred fought his Bill at every stage. Their nominal leader was Lord George Bentinck, a man of respectable but not brilliant capacity; their real leader was Benjamin Disraeli. Of Jewish extraction, and not owning a perch of land or feeling any sympathy with the country squire, he might best be described as a political adventurer. His convictions on any subject were not deep, his ambition was boundless, his power of invective unsurpassed; and in Parliamentary warfare no man could lead a party better to the attack. Distrusted by Peel, who refused to give him office, he revenged himself by leading the Protectionists; and in the Corn Law debates he attacked the Premier with a violence, a venom, and even a ferocity such as had rarely been seen within the walls of Parliament. He fought, however, in vain. The Whigs and Irish supported Peel, and the cause for which Cobden had laboured so long triumphed in the repeal of the Corn Laws. On the Coercion Bill Disraeli's turn came. Under his leadership the Protectionists joined the Whigs and Irish in opposition. Peel was defeated and at once resigned, and in July Lord John Russell and the Liberals came into office.<sup>1</sup>

By that time the threatened famine in Ireland had become an awful reality. In Clare many people were starving, near Limerick not even a rotten potato was left, in Kilkenny three-fourths of the inhabitants had not three days' provisions; and all this as early as April. In May there was not a potato within twenty miles of Clonmel; provisions had reached famine prices; and in Galway potatoes were selling at sixpence a stone,

<sup>1</sup> O'Rorke, pp. 116-17; Walpole, pp. 273-86; Peel's *Memoirs*; *Annual Register*, pp. 142-60.

and even half of those sold were unfit for food. By the month of June 51,000 were in the workhouses, and before that date there had been deaths from starvation in Limerick and in Newry.<sup>1</sup>

Far worse than this followed. During the spring the poor people had made heroic efforts to obtain seed potatoes. They pinched and saved and stinted themselves, they sold their corn and stock, and even their bedclothes; and often the dress, which on Sunday had excited the admiration of her friends and the envy of her female rivals, was deposited at the pawnshop by the rustic beauty, with quivering lips and tearful eyes. The seed obtained with such difficulty and with such sacrifice was duly sown, and up to the end of July all promised well. But again the blight fell, and the potato crop all over the land became its victim. Not half the crop, as in 1845, but the whole crop was thus suddenly blotted out of existence. Gazing at his rotting potato fields, the afflicted peasant bowed his head in anguish and looked to the future without hope. It would be a low estimate to put the loss at £20,000,000, and it has been put at twice that amount<sup>2</sup>—a calamity to which even the chequered history of Ireland was unable to furnish a parallel.

In the early part of the year Peel carried through Parliament several measures to meet the distress. Under these Acts the Grand Juries at Assizes got more ample powers to hold extraordinary presentment Sessions for country works; the Board of Works also got more power; there was an Act to facilitate the employment of the labouring poor in the distressed districts; and Indian meal was imported and sold at reasonable rates.<sup>3</sup> Under these Acts £733,000 were expended by the 15th of August; there was also a relief fund, and altogether a sum of £852,000 was spent. So far there had been a good deal of suffering, though the deaths were few. But Lord John Russell had to combat a much greater calamity, and must therefore go much further than Peel. At once he appointed Mr. Shiel and several Catholics to office; made Lord Bessborough, an old

<sup>1</sup> O'Rourke, pp. 118-21.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 153-6.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 160-61.



friend of O'Connell's, Viceroy, with Mr. Labouchere as Chief Secretary ; and O'Connell readily supported the new Government, believing it would grapple successfully with the famine.<sup>1</sup> This confidence was not quite justified. The Board of Works had been found inefficient.<sup>2</sup> Public works supported by public funds ought surely to be works of public utility : if Government food depots were to be established they ought to be within easy reach of the people, and the food ought to be cheap ; and it was unfair to burden the rates with the weight of a national calamity. Yet this is what the Premier did. By his Labour Rate Act the Viceroy was empowered to call together extraordinary presentment Sessions, which might present public works, and these, when passed by the Treasury, were carried out by the Board of Works. Repayment was to be made by half-yearly instalments levied on the poor-rate.<sup>3</sup> Relief Committees might be formed, but only to prepare lists of those to be employed. Government relief depôts, stocked with Indian meal, were set up along the western coast, but were not to supersede or undersell the local shopkeeper ;<sup>4</sup> and the works undertaken were not to be reproductive, but only for the sake of employment.

In a short time indeed the Chief Secretary and Lord-Lieutenant took upon themselves to allow reproductive works,<sup>5</sup> but beyond this they did not go. The rates became so burdened that in Cork County alone presentments passed amounting to £228,000 ; in Mayo, out of 56,200 families 46,000 were on the public works. Before the end of the year £1,000,000 had been advanced by the Treasury ; 350,000 men were employed and 150,000 others pleaded for work in vain,<sup>6</sup> and, being hungry, were clamouring for food.

To superintend these public works a horde of 7000 officials were spread over the country. Some, being insolent, refused work to the destitute ; others, being corrupt, delayed to pay for it when done ; and many minimized the famine in the midst of

<sup>1</sup> *Correspondence*, ii. 376-84.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 167-9.

<sup>5</sup> *O'Connell's Correspondence*, ii. 385-7.

<sup>2</sup> O'Rorke, pp. 158-9.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* 161, 227.

<sup>6</sup> O'Rorke, pp. 203-20.

famishing crowds.<sup>1</sup> The rule of the Government depots not to interfere with the shopkeepers was unfortunate, for heartless corn merchants were found to traffic on the people's miseries, and buying the corn cheap they sold it dear.<sup>2</sup> Women and children, half-naked and perishing with cold, swarmed over the turnip fields, devouring the turnips raw, while the little children looked on screaming with hunger.<sup>3</sup> Starving and menacing crowds paraded the streets demanding work and food,<sup>4</sup> deaths from starvation began and continued, the clergy and dispensary doctors were worn out attending the sick and dying, coroners' inquests became frequent with "died from starvation" as their verdicts; and Mitchel calculates that in 1846 "not less than 300,000<sup>5</sup> perished either of mere hunger or of typhus fever caused by hunger."<sup>6</sup>

To still further dishearten the afflicted people the popular leaders were at war. At the death of Davis the nominal leader of the Young Irelanders was Smith O'Brien, but the real leader had since become John Mitchel. He was a solicitor, and an Ulster Presbyterian, and like Wolfe Tone seems to have always hated England. He had considerable literary capacity, took Carlyle as his model and imitated him with success, and was as bold, as blunt, and as outspoken as his master. He had little sympathy with O'Connell's peaceful agitation, still less with his ultra-Catholic views, and none at all with his constant preaching of the doctrine that in no case should there be spilling of blood; and he regarded the renewed alliance of O'Connell and Lord John Russell with undisguised hatred and contempt. Absolutely fearless, he would have held the meeting at Clontarf in defiance of Government, would have broken down the bridges behind the troops as they left the city, and captured the city itself; and when the people were dying of famine in 1846, he would have seized the people's corn, which, to pay the landlord's rent, was borne from the Irish shores on

<sup>1</sup> O'Rorke, pp. 201, 214-15.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 225-6.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 207.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* 228-37.

<sup>5</sup> The Government returns were 2041 *registered deaths*.

<sup>6</sup> *Last Conquest*, pp. 117-18



every outward-flowing tide. By O'Connell these views were abhorred. He wished to remain on good terms with Lord John Russell, wished the Repeal Association to be in everything loyal and peaceable, and in July 1846 he proposed a series of resolutions pledging the members against physical force not only in the present but for the future, no matter what contingency might arise. He was answered in a speech of extraordinary eloquence by a young recruit to the Young Ireland party, Thomas Francis Meagher, and as neither side would give way, and there was no one like Davis strong enough to make peace, the Young Irelanders, headed by Smith O'Brien, left Conciliation Hall and set up the Irish Confederation. Henceforth, says Mitchel, the Repeal Association was of no use except to obtain offices for the friends of O'Connell.<sup>1</sup>

The year 1846 thus closed in darkness and gloom, but in the new year the gloom deepened and the horrors were greater still. In January Parliament met, and in the same month some of the Irish landlords, having formed themselves into a Reproductive Works Committee, held a public meeting in Dublin and had a series of resolutions passed. They asked to have the Navigation and Corn Laws suspended ; condemned the Labour Rate Act and its wasteful expenditure in useless works ; demanded State loans to the landlords for reclamation ; demanded that railways should be built, and such reproductive works set on foot as drainage, building of piers and harbours, and, further, that emigration should be encouraged by the State.<sup>2</sup>

While not willing to give legislative sanction to all these resolutions, the Government recognized that the Labour Rate Act should be superseded. Two measures were therefore introduced and passed, one commonly called the Soup Kitchen Act, which established a Relief Committee in each district, empowered to levy rates, receive subscriptions, and also receive donations from Government. To those able to work on the farmers' lands, or even on their own, they were to give wages ; to those

<sup>1</sup> *O'Connell's Correspondence*, ii. 377-98 ; *Last Conquest*, pp. 114-15.

<sup>2</sup> O'Rorke, pp. 280-92.

unable to work they were to give food, and for this purpose soup kitchens were set up. To cheapen food the Corn and Navigation Laws were suspended till November.<sup>1</sup> By another Act outdoor relief was to be given to the destitute whom the workhouses could not contain; but an Irish member, Mr. Gregory, had a clause added disentitling to outdoor relief those in possession of more than a rood of land. Mr. Gregory had also another clause added providing assistance out of the rates for emigration.<sup>2</sup> A sum of £50,000 was advanced as a loan to landlords to obtain potato seed, and £620,000 to Irish railways. The Premier also promised measures for reclamation and drainage, but the opposition was so strong that he was unable to proceed. Many of the English members blamed the Irish landlords, and were unwilling to relieve Irish distress with Imperial funds. Peel, whose influence in debate was enormous, voiced these views, telling the Premier that he had better turn to other work than draining Irish bogs.<sup>3</sup> Peel also helped to defeat a measure of Lord George Bentinck whereby £16,000,000 were to be advanced by the State for the construction of Irish railways.<sup>4</sup>

The Soup Kitchen Act did not become law until the end of May; but the Government, well aware that it would pass and that time pressed, formed Relief Committees in the end of February. There were then more than 700,000 men employed on the public works, the expenditure for the month of February being all but a million pounds. Gradually these works were to be discontinued. On the 20th of March one-fifth of the men were paid off, and by the end of April all works started under the Labour Rate Act had ceased. This was dismissing the men too rapidly, for the Relief Committees in many districts were not yet in working order, and to stop work and wages without having anything to give as a substitute necessarily produced much misery.<sup>5</sup> But when the

<sup>1</sup> *Annual Register*, pp. 21-23.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 47.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 33-34.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* 54-56; O'Rorke, pp. 335-63.

<sup>5</sup> *Transactions of Friends' Relief Committee* (Halliday Pamphlets, p. 1990).



new measures were really working, they worked well and fought the famine with much greater success than the Labour Rate Act. To obtain nourishing food at a small cost M. Soyer, the *chef* of the London Reform Club, came to Ireland and set up a model soup kitchen. But his system was not a success. The people preferred nourishing soup to what was weak and watery, no matter how great the art expended on its manufacture, and M. Soyer soon returned to London.<sup>1</sup> The Irish cooks, with less pretence and probably with less art, did better, and in Cork city as many as 48,000 quarts of soup were served out every week. The efforts of the State were largely supplemented by the exertions of private Committees and Associations. The Irish Central Relief Committee collected and expended £70,000, the Society of Friends nearly £200,000, the British Association £600,000, and there were besides an Indian Relief Fund, Evangelical, Baptist, and Wesleyan Committees, and several Ladies' Clothing Societies.<sup>2</sup> Subscriptions came from all parts of the world and from all classes of men—from the cities of England, from France and Italy and Austria and Switzerland, from the West Indian Islands, from Canada, from distant Madras and Calcutta, from Australia (more distant still). The Sultan of Turkey sent a large donation;<sup>3</sup> individual Englishmen gave as much as £1000; and English railroads and shipping companies carried parcels of clothes free.

But the supplies sent from America were on a scale unparalleled in history. Not a city from Boston to New Orleans but held its meeting and formed its Relief Committee. The generous heart of a great nation was profoundly stirred. Rich merchants gave princely subscriptions, professional men were not behindhand, all the churches aided, and poor men readily laid down their dollars. From Philadelphia alone eight vessels were sent with provisions; the States of Alabama and Niagara sent large consignments of Indian corn; railroads carried free of charge all packages marked Ireland; free

<sup>1</sup> O'Rorke, pp. 427-31.

<sup>2</sup> *Halliday Pamphlets*, p. 1990.

<sup>3</sup> O'Rorke, p. 373.

storage for such was offered to any extent ; public carriers would accept nothing for conveying what was destined for Irish relief ; even war-vessels had their guns removed and were used to transport food to the starving nation across the sea.<sup>1</sup>

By these donations, generously given and gratefully received, many lives were saved. But the famine still marched in triumph over the land, and every day fresh victims were offered up to satisfy its insatiable demands. People died in the cities and in the towns, even in Dublin and Belfast and Cork and Limerick, as well as in the country districts ; they died in the fields ; they died at the public works and on the way to the Government depots for food ; they died at the workhouse door vainly seeking for admission ; they died in the workhouses themselves, where fever and dysentery, following on famine, did what famine was unable to do. In Cork Workhouse 44 died in a single day ; in the South Dublin Union 700 were down with dysentery ; in Westport Union, of 33 anointed in one day by the priest, only three were living on the following day. Weakened with hunger or sick with fever or dysentery, they lay down in their cabins, without a bed to lie on, without food or fire, often without clothes. In one house 17 persons were found lying together in fever ; a young man was found lying in fever by the side of his brother, dead for three days, and of his sister, dead for five days ; a mother putting her five children to bed at night found some of them dead with hunger in the morning ; and often, when all but one of a family had died, the survivor barred up the doors and windows of his little cabin to keep out the dogs and pigs, and then lay down, dying amidst the dead. Car-drivers passing along saw corpses on the road and often drove over corpses at night ; a father and son dying of hunger, the survivors of the family, unable to buy a candle, kept up a light during the night by pulling the thatch off the house and setting it on fire. Funerals ceased to be attended. The afflicted father brought the dead bodies of his children to the graveyard

<sup>1</sup> *Halliday Pamphlets*, p. 1990.



alone ; corpses were often tied up in straw and thus buried, or were not buried at all and were eaten by rats and dogs ; coffins became a luxury, and in Skibbereen and elsewhere hinged coffins were used, one body after another being brought to the grave in the same coffin.<sup>1</sup> Coroners were unequal to the task of holding so many inquests, and often when inquests were held, the jury, enraged at what they saw, brought in a verdict of wilful murder against Lord John Russell.<sup>2</sup>

In the midst of such horrors the living began to envy the dead, for *they* had ceased to suffer while the living had their sufferings still to go through. Many lived on cabbage and a little meal, others on cabbage and seaweed ; in Mayo men lived on turnips, and some on ass and horse flesh, even when diseased ;<sup>3</sup> others on grass and turf, and in one case a woman ate her dead child.<sup>4</sup> Men worked on the roads without shoes, women were almost naked, children with nothing to cover them but an old shirt and ragged waistcoat ; and this while the blasts of winter blew. On his journey to Donegal Mr. Foster noted that pigs and poultry had disappeared ; the dogs had been killed ; the people had a sickly livid colour ; the children had ceased to play, and reduced to skeletons by hunger, they had lost the freshness of youth, and were like weazened old men. Some of the resident landlords were doing their best to relieve suffering, but the absentees, with a callousness which it would be hard to equal and impossible to surpass, remained unmoved, and to the relief funds not one penny did they subscribe.<sup>5</sup> The law allowed them—and shame for Parliament that it did—to seize for rent ; and in the midst of hunger and horror, bailiffs and agents supported by police laid hands on everything. They seized the people's sheep and cattle and oats, or their scanty furniture, or the potatoes grown from seed given in charity. They turned the people out-of-doors, levelled their cabins or set them on fire, and sent their starving tenants adrift without money or clothes, with the result that in the

<sup>1</sup> O'Connor's *The Parnell Movement*, p. 38.

<sup>2</sup> O'Rorke, pp. 366-419.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 390.

<sup>4</sup> O'Connor, p. 31.

<sup>5</sup> *Halliday Pamphlets*, p. 1991.

Barony of Erris in Mayo 6000 died of famine in a single year. "I have visited," said Mr. Tuke, "the wasted remains of the once noble Red Man on his reservation grounds in North America, and explored the 'Negro Quarter' of the degraded and enslaved African, but never have I seen misery so intense, or physical degradation so complete as among the dwellers in the bog holes of Erris."<sup>1</sup>

While famine and fever thus held sway, and the evictor levelled and burned the humble houses of the poor, to the nation bowed down by so many afflictions there came across the ocean the sad news that O'Connell was dead. Under the constant strain of his public labour his splendid constitution had become impaired, and probably as early as 1844 he was attacked by softening of the brain. The failure of the Repeal movement, his imprisonment, the dissensions between Young and Old Irelanders, which he vainly strove to end<sup>2</sup>—all these helped to develop the fatal disease which soon held him in its grasp. But it was the famine above all which struck him the most crushing blow. To see those whom he loved so well and for whom he had laboured so long perishing by thousands, and to feel unable to save them, was more than he could bear.<sup>3</sup> Out of their poverty these poor people had helped to swell his yearly tribute; they had been his audiences at the monster meetings; they laughed or wept with him, responsive to his every mood; they cheered themselves hoarse at the very mention of his name; he was their idol, their uncrowned king, the leader whom they would have followed to the ends of the earth. And now he could not save them. Their potato fields were a mass of putrefaction; the air they breathed was laden with pestilence; their cabins were in ruins, or if still standing were the abodes of hunger and disease; and day after day thousands of men and women were going down to their coffinless graves.

Feeble and failing as he was, O'Connell laboured to stem the ever-rising tide. He made speeches, he wrote letters, he

<sup>1</sup> *A Visit to Connaught in 1847.*

<sup>2</sup> *O'Connell's Correspondence*, ii. 393-8.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 392, 402-3.



propounded plans, he moved resolutions, he hurled Peel from power when Peel's specific for Irish discontent was fetters rather than food ;<sup>1</sup> and his last speech in Parliament was a plaintive appeal for the starving people. "Ireland is in your hands," he said ; "she is in your power. If you don't save her, she can't save herself ; and I solemnly call upon you to recollect that I predict, with the sincerest conviction, that one-fourth of her population will perish unless you come to her relief." <sup>2</sup>

This is the speech which Disraeli describes as having been delivered in April 1846 by "a feeble old man muttering at a table."<sup>3</sup> But the true date was February 1847, and by that time indeed O'Connell was bent and bowed, his once powerful frame shrivelled and shrunk, and with difficulty members heard that voice which had so often thrilled the House of Commons. But he was listened to with much respect, and cheers greeted him from all quarters of the House. A few days later he got seriously ill. The doctors recommended a warmer climate. O'Connell himself, expecting that death was near, wished to die at Rome, and early in March set out for the Eternal City.

In London and on his journey the greatest kindness and sympathy were shown him. Newspapers and public men who had so often reviled him spoke of him with respect ; the Queen sent to inquire for his health ; Lord Shrewsbury, whom he had assailed some years before, repeatedly called at his hotel ; Lord Decies, one of the Waterford Beresfords, sent him shamrocks on St. Patrick's Day ; and when he was leaving Folkestone for France crowds assembled to wish him Godspeed. At Paris he was visited by Montalembert and other prominent Catholics, who hailed him as the greatest of Catholic leaders ;<sup>4</sup> at Lyons the sympathy for him was universal and sincere ; at Genoa the whole city prayed for his recovery. But it was not to be, and on the 15th of May, as the sinking sun was gilding

<sup>1</sup> *O'Connell's Correspondence*, ii. 375, 385-6.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 403.

<sup>3</sup> *Life of Bentinck*.

<sup>4</sup> Nemours Godre, *Daniel O'Connell, sa vie, son œuvre*, pp. 368-70.

with purple glory both land and sea, he breathed his last in that superb city which in its pride and beauty looks down upon the blue waters of the Mediterranean. His wish was that his heart should be brought to Rome and his body to Ireland, and this was done. Nor could anything exceed the respect paid to his remains on the long journey home. At Liverpool, as the vessel carrying the body passed down the Mersey, the ships of all nations in the river lowered their flags. In mid-Channel an Irish vessel was met outward bound. It contained Irish emigrants, and when it was known that O'Connell's remains were on board the homeward-bound vessel, the Irish threw themselves on the deck, uttering heart-rending cries. Through the streets of Dublin 50,000 followed the remains to the grave, and twice that number were spectators along the route.<sup>1</sup> The greatest of the land in Church and State were present or represented, and the whole Catholic people mourned him as their champion and their chief, whose place no living Irishman could fill.<sup>2</sup>

Many at that time and since have adversely criticized the policy and sought to minimize the services of O'Connell. They blame him for his sharp censures of the men of '98, for his constant denunciation of rebellion, for his abandonment of the Clontarf meeting, for his alliances with the Whigs, for the poor legislative results which followed so many years of agitation and sacrifice. But they lose sight of his difficulties. The French Revolution and the '98 Rebellion gave him a horror of seeking reform through violence, and he knew that it was the Rebellion of '98 which had made the Union possible. Few will agree with him that it is never lawful to rebel ; for tyranny sometimes becomes unbearable, and the history of the world shows that it is only by the sword some of the greatest victories of human liberty have been won. After all, to hold the Clontarf meeting would probably have ended in massacre, and O'Connell's error was not in abandoning it,

<sup>1</sup> *Annual Register*, p. 99.

<sup>2</sup> *O'Connell's Correspondence*, ii. 404-18 ; Mitchel's *Last Conquest*, pp. 135-7.



but in thinking that a mere display of force would have succeeded in 1843 as it had in 1829. The legislative fruits of the Whig alliance were indeed small. Yet it was something to end the tithe war, to reform the corporations, to emancipate the Catholics. Nor must Drummond's administration be forgotten, when the tithe-proctor was curbed, the landlord reminded of his duties, and law impartially administered. But much more than all this was the change affected in the people themselves. When O'Connell commenced his public life he found them beaten and cowed, without courage, without spirit, almost without hope. He lifted them up, gave them courage and hope and confidence, taught them to feel their strength and bid defiance to their landlords, who had hitherto led them to the polling-booths like sheep. He fought their enemies at the Bar, restrained the violence of their tyrants on the Bench, chastised their traducers in the Senate, made their cause known to the world, and was one of the few men in the British Isles large enough to be seen throughout Europe. He had his faults, as all men have, and perhaps his countrymen liked him all the better for this, for his faults and failings were their own. In his own day no man could compete with him for popular favour, and the verdict of his own day has become the verdict of history. Ireland was grateful, and has not failed to give visible proof of her gratitude. The finest street in her metropolis bears his name; facing O'Connell Bridge, his colossal statue, the product of Irish genius, looks down on the crowds as they pass and repass; and as the traveller from the country approaches Dublin his attention is arrested by a graceful round tower which stands sentinel over O'Connell's grave. A grateful nation thus honourably discharges its debt in paying fitting homage to the memory of the greatest of her sons.

It was in August that O'Connell was laid to rest, and by that time the country could rejoice amid its many sorrows that the harvest—both potatoes and corn—was abundant. But for many this availed little. Thousands being debarred

from relief if they held more than a rood of land, voluntarily surrendered their farms. Many thousands more were ruthlessly evicted by their landlords. Such was the effect of these co-operating causes, that within one year 70,000 occupiers with their families were rooted out of the land. What the landlords wished was to consolidate farms, and while the number of holdings under thirty acres were thus diminished, those over thirty acres were increased.<sup>1</sup> These lawless and homeless men, seeking admission to the work-houses, found them full; wandering aimlessly about, they were imprisoned under the Vagrancy Act;<sup>2</sup> stricken with fever, they found the fever hospitals choked with patients to such an extent that in '47 alone 156,000 patients were admitted to the fever hospitals.<sup>3</sup> Thousands of others died in their houses or on the roads, and not only of fever but also of dysentery, dropsy and small-pox; and Mitchel's estimate is that in 1847 half a million died of famine and disease.<sup>4</sup>

To foreign countries and the Colonies there had been from 1831 to 1841 a continuous stream of emigration, a yearly average of 43,000; the numbers increased in the years that followed, until, in 1846, 106,000 left Ireland for foreign countries, besides 278,000 landed at Liverpool.<sup>5</sup> But in 1847 all previous records were beaten. The crowds whom eviction and the Poor Law had made homeless, being unable to pay the passage across the Atlantic, crossed to England. All were poor, some unable to work, many already in fever; and while the English workmen disliked to have the English labour market thus flooded by Irish exiles, the English rate-payers disliked having so many thrown on the rates and so many in hospitals and elsewhere to spread disease. The Government took alarm, and an Order in Council was issued imposing stringent quarantine regulations; shipping companies were also induced to raise the rates for deck passages; and these

<sup>1</sup> *Last Conquest*, pp. 126-211.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 127-8.

<sup>3</sup> O'Rorke, p. 481.

<sup>4</sup> *Last Conquest*, p. 143.

<sup>5</sup> O'Rorke, pp. 486-7.



measures all but closed Great Britain to Irish emigrants.<sup>1</sup> Scraping together the little money they could gather, or helped by the landlords, who were delighted to get rid of them, thousands then turned their faces to the setting sun, and every vessel which left Ireland for Canada and the United States was filled with Irish, fleeing from famine and disease. Once embarked, fresh horrors were in store for them. The vessels were crowded, the ventilation defective, the food scant and unhealthy, the water impure, medical attendance wanting; and soon, generated by unsanitary conditions or perhaps carried on board by some passenger, fever broke out, and the ships became so many charnel-houses. Of 493 who sailed on the *Erin Queen* 136 died on the voyage; on the *Avon*, 246 out of 552; on the *Virginia*, 267 out of 476; and on another vessel not named, out of 600 only 100 survived.<sup>2</sup> And when the survivors landed on American soil they landed only to die. Along the banks of the St. Lawrence were to be found "one unbroken chain of graves, where repose father and mother, sisters and brothers, in a commingled heap, no stone marking the spot."<sup>3</sup> Farther south, dishonest lodging-house keepers and railroad and shipping agents, equally dishonest, preyed upon the freshly arrived—Germans on Germans, Irish on Irish—and a Commission appointed by the State of New York reported that they had no conception that these frauds were so great.<sup>4</sup>

Meanwhile, repelled from the workhouses, debarred from crossing to England, unable to reach America, made vagrants by evictions and punished as such by Act of Parliament, the homeless at home grew desperate, and through the autumn and winter outrages were common. Landlords, agents, bailiffs, magistrates and police fell victims to popular wrath, and rarely were the assailants brought to justice.<sup>5</sup> Parliament was summoned in November, but instead of the evictor's

<sup>1</sup> *Last Conquest*, p. 128.

<sup>2</sup> O'Rorke, p. 499.

<sup>3</sup> *Four Years of Irish History*, p. 532.

<sup>4</sup> *Halliday Pamphlets*, p. 1990; O'Rorke, pp. 498-502.

<sup>5</sup> Walpole's *England*, iv. 325-8.

hand being stayed the old specific for Irish disaffection was again tried, and a Coercion Bill was soon passed into law.<sup>1</sup> But disaffection continued and increased. Mitchel openly advocated violence, resolved to cross the path of the British car of conquest even though it should crush him to atoms.<sup>2</sup> Unable to carry with him the Irish Confederation, he seceded from it; unable to persuade the *Nation*, he established the *United Irishman*, and in its columns urged that the corn leaving the country to pay rents should be forcibly detained to feed the hungry. Under the influence of his teaching Sarsfield Clubs were formed, arms were purchased, pikes manufactured, men were enrolled and drilled and studied the tactics of guerilla warfare. Before the new year had advanced far his hands were strengthened by the events which occurred in England and on the Continent. The English Chartists demanding manhood suffrage, vote by ballot, annual Parliaments, payment of members and other things,<sup>3</sup> and finding that Parliament persistently refused their demands, now menaced Parliament with force. In France Louis Philippe was dethroned; the Austrians were driven from Italy; there were uprisings in Rome and Vienna and Berlin; and the sounds that came to Ireland across the seas were the exultant shouts of the masses, the lamentations of reactionary and discarded ministers and the crash of falling thrones.<sup>4</sup> Mitchel's adherents soon increased, the Confederation adopted his views, and Smith O'Brien, Meagher, Dillon and the other leaders became as anxious as he was to try the fortune of war.

The Government anticipated them, and a Treason Felony Act was passed, making the speaking, writing or printing anything revolutionary punishable by transportation; and under this new Act, Mitchel, by means of a duly packed

<sup>1</sup> *Annual Register*, pp. 225-43. Peel supported the Government, and was disgusted that a much more drastic measure had not been introduced (*Greville's Memoirs*, vi. 109-10).

<sup>2</sup> *Last Conquest*, p. 143.

<sup>3</sup> Walpole, iv. 47.

<sup>4</sup> *Greville's Memoirs*, vi. 159.



jury, was convicted and sent for fourteen years to Van Diemen's Land.<sup>1</sup> The *United Irishman* was suppressed and so were its two successors, the *Irish Tribune* and the *Irish Felon*, and in July the Habeas Corpus Act was suspended.<sup>2</sup> Had it not been, there would probably have been no attempt at insurrection. Mitchel was the only man of action among the leaders. The others were for the most part poets and essayists, and such men dream of revolutions but do not make them. But when the Habeas Corpus Act had been suspended, O'Brien and his friends, knowing that they would be at once cast into prison, left Dublin to rouse the masses in Tipperary. The priests, however, had been before them, and pointing out the futility of undisciplined masses waging war against a great empire, induced many to abandon the idea of a rebellion. Many others were disgusted with Smith O'Brien. He was honourable, upright, chivalrous and brave, but he was also weak and irresolute, and utterly incompetent to be a successful leader, either in peace or war.<sup>3</sup> An abortive attack on a police barrack at Ballingarry was his only exploit. The crowds then melted away from him, and he and Meagher and M'Manus were arrested, convicted and sentenced to death, the sentence in each case being commuted to transportation beyond the seas. Duffy was prosecuted but acquitted, Dillon escaped to America; others were thrown into prison, under the Habeas Corpus Act, or were pardoned; the Government had triumphed, and the miserable insurrection of 1848 was at an end.<sup>4</sup>

When Parliament met in 1849 seventy-one Irish Unions were bankrupt;<sup>5</sup> and now, says Mitchel, as the Poor Law hitherto had failed, Ireland was to have more Poor Law.<sup>6</sup> At all events Lord John Russell had an Act passed called the Rate-in-Aid Act, under which, when the rate in any electoral

<sup>1</sup> *Last Conquest*, pp. 168-9, 185; O'Connor, p. 48.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 196.      <sup>3</sup> *O'Connell's Correspondence*, ii. 183-4.

<sup>4</sup> *Last Conquest*, pp. 193-207.

<sup>5</sup> *Two Centuries of Irish History*, p. 413.

<sup>6</sup> *Last Conquest*, p. 211.

division reached 5s., it was to be supplemented by a Union rate, and when the rate over the whole Union reached 7s., it was to be supplemented by a rate of sixpence in the pound over the whole country.<sup>1</sup> Angry with Ireland because of the attempted insurrection of '48, the British Parliament was not disposed to be generous, and the Irish members it could afford to despise. At the General Election of 1847 the Repealers had beaten the Young Irelanders, whom they denounced as atheists and murderers of O'Connell, and they had refused to pledge themselves against accepting office. John O'Connell himself was a place-hunter, and so were the Repealers who followed him; and in 1849 the sufferings of Ireland were greater than in any previous year except 1847. Within twelve months the landlords dispossessed half a million of persons, and with such heartlessness and cruelty that even the unimpassioned Peel denounced them.<sup>2</sup> The partial failure of the harvest of '48 sent many to their graves; fever and dysentery added their victims; and in 1849 cholera first appeared, killing 36,000,—the total deaths from famine and disease in that year reaching 240,000.<sup>3</sup> During all this time the tide of emigration continued to flow. In 1847, 215,000 emigrated; almost the same number in 1849; and in 1851, when the famine was over, 257,000 left Ireland.<sup>4</sup> In the latter year the population was brought down to 6,500,000,<sup>5</sup> and O'Connell's prediction that a fourth of the people would be lost was fulfilled.

Not less disastrous than this terrible depletion was the change effected in the character of the people. Cases there were where the noblest charity and self-sacrifice were shown. Priests, who attended the sick during the day, often gave their evening meal to some of the famishing poor and went themselves supperless to bed; a Protestant clergyman was known to have taken off his shirt and put it on a naked fever patient; doctors shirked no duty, and often paid the penalty of their devo-

<sup>1</sup> Walpole, iv. 352-4.

<sup>2</sup> O'Connor, *The Parnell Movement*, pp. 67-68, 73.

<sup>3</sup> O'Connor, pp. 42-43, 54.

<sup>4</sup> O'Rorke, p. 496.

<sup>5</sup> *Last Conquest*, p. 218.



tion with their lives ; even some landlords lived on Indian meal, the more generously to relieve the poor ; parents dying with hunger gave the untasted food to their children, and died that their children might live ; and many shared their last meal with the beggar who came to their doors. But there is the dark side to the picture also. The unburied corpses, the unattended funerals, the pitiful pleadings of the hungry, the torture of the fever-stricken ceased to arouse pity. Overpowering calamity had dried up the fountains of compassion, and hearts no longer felt which had once been generous and kind. The self-respect engendered by Father Mathew's temperance teaching, the self-reliance engendered by the Repeal agitation had equally disappeared. Outside of hell Mr. Gavan Duffy thought there were no sights to equal those he had seen in a Munster work-house. Fed like dogs, housed like cattle, the inmates were huddled together, naked and unashamed, screaming, cursing, howling with pain, whining for food, having acquired the instincts of the lower animal and lost the higher attributes of man. And on the streets and roads, women and children, once modest and self-respecting, cried, whined and lied with the shameless audacity of the professional beggar.<sup>1</sup> These were among the most direful results of the famine, and some of them remained long after the famine had passed away.

<sup>1</sup> O'Connor, pp. 83-84.

## CHAPTER IX

### *O'Connell's Successors*

THE Irish peasant's history has been a sad one. While the clan system flourished, the petty wars of contending chiefs, their restlessness, their jealousies, their exactions left the peasant without hope of peace, protection of property or incentive to industry; and the Anglo-Norman lords extended to him the burdens, but not the blessings, both of Brehon and feudal law. The religious changes of the sixteenth century greatly embittered the relations between the ruling and subject classes. The confiscations and plantations of the seventeenth century accentuated and perpetuated the antagonisms which prevailed; and when Protestants had been invested with lands and power, and Catholics had been deprived of both, the relations established between landlord and tenant were much more difficult for the peasant to endure than that which had existed between lord and vassal, or between clansman and chief.

In the Irish Protestant Parliament of the eighteenth century the landlords' power was supreme. To the lands they held confiscation was their common title.<sup>1</sup> It was the Catholics around them who had been despoiled, and the main object of the Penal Code was to impoverish and degrade them, to leave them without the power to rebel, the hope of improving their condition, or even the spirit to complain. And to this extent the Penal Code succeeded. Native and English writers of the eighteenth century—Swift and Prior, Boulter, Berkeley, Dobbs and Young<sup>2</sup>—had pictured the condition of the peasants of their time as in the lowest scale of human misery. Newenham

<sup>1</sup> *Lord Clare's Speech*, 1800.

<sup>2</sup> O'Brien's *Fifty Years of Concessions to Ireland*, ii. 40-41.



and Wakefield, who wrote in the early part of the next century, could only show that this condition was not improved by the Act of Union; and De Beaumont, who studied the Irish question with the unprejudiced eyes of a foreigner, declared in 1837 that the miseries endured by the Irish peasant were worse than those of the Indian in his forests or those of the negro in his chains.<sup>1</sup>

The British Parliament had at no time been just where Irish Catholic tenants were concerned. Its sympathies had been with the Irish Parliament in its enactment of the Penal Code; its reluctance to grant civil rights to Catholics was shown long after the era of penal legislation had passed away; and its obstinate resistance to emancipation was specially discreditable in view of the promises made at the Union by Pitt and Castlereagh. The fact was that England had long continued to regard the Irish Catholics as foes—men ever ready to rise in rebellion at home, or assist the enemies of England abroad. Disdaining to conciliate them, she refused to allay their discontent, and preferred to have them helpless and poor. But the Irish landlords, on the contrary, she regarded with special affection. These men of her own race and religion she had planted on Irish soil in the midst of a hostile population. She ruled Ireland through them, loaded them with power and privileges, gratified their every caprice, condoned their numerous misdeeds, protected them from the wrath of those whom they had treated as worse than slaves, and this with the whole force of a mighty empire. Every secret society which arose, from the Whiteboys to the Ribbonmen, owed its origin to oppressive landlordism;<sup>2</sup> almost every outrage perpetrated might be traced to the same cause, and this every thoughtful writer and speaker was ready to acknowledge.<sup>3</sup>

But Parliament would not interfere. At the cost of a few shillings the landlord could obtain an ejectment decree, whether the rent had been paid or not;<sup>4</sup> he could raise the rent at will;

<sup>1</sup> De Beaumont, *L'Irlande, sociale, politique et religieuse*, p. 176.

<sup>2</sup> O'Brien, ii. 77, 89, 93.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 96-107; G. C. Lewis, *Local Disturbances in Ireland*, pp. 32, 97.

<sup>4</sup> Mitchel's *Last Conquest*, p. 66.

he could distrain the tenants' growing crops for rent and sell them when ripe, charging the expense of doing so on the tenant.<sup>1</sup> He could make what arbitrary estate rules he pleased, could send the tenants' cattle to the pound; and if the tenant summoned the offending landlord or bailiff, he knew what to expect from a landlord magistrate on the Bench.<sup>2</sup> If he merely complained he might have his rent raised; if he complained publicly he was regarded as a disloyal subject; if he joined a secret society he might be sent to prison or to the scaffold; and if disturbances arose, the landlords cried out for repressive laws, and Parliament promptly responded by giving them a Coercion Act.

Despairing of Parliament, O'Connell looked to Repeal as the great remedy, and agitated the Land question but little. But Mr. Brownlow in 1829 brought in a Bill for the reclamation of waste lands; Mr. Poulett Scope, an old friend to Ireland, introduced a Land Bill in 1834; and Mr. Sharman Crawford brought in Bills in 1836 and 1837, merely giving the tenant compensation for disturbance. Not one of these measures passed into law.<sup>3</sup> Parliament would do nothing but pass Coercion Acts. The landlords and tenants were left face to face: the former evicted; the latter, driven to desperation, had recourse to secret societies and outrage; and in the desultory agrarian warfare which went on, the landlord's writ was met by the peasant's gun.<sup>4</sup>

Sir Robert Peel had no affection for Ireland and little for reform. He was Irish Secretary in 1814, when Judge Fletcher advised the Grand Jurors of Wicklow to give their tenants a property in their holdings, assuring them that such action on the part of the landlords would be more efficacious for the repression of outrages than the cord and the gibbet.<sup>5</sup> But

<sup>1</sup> Bryce, pp. 263-5.

<sup>2</sup> O'Brien, ii. 111-12; Perraud's *Ireland under English Rule*, pp. 84-87. "Landlords there exercise their rights with a hand of iron, and disregard their duties with a forehead of brass" (*Times*, Feb. 25, 1847).

<sup>3</sup> *Parnell Movement*, pp. 16-17.

<sup>4</sup> O'Brien, ii. 114-15.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* ii. 99.



Peel shut his eyes and closed his ears, dined and feasted with Orangemen and landlords, and in 1817 passed a Bill through Parliament cheapening and making easier the process of eviction.<sup>1</sup> In the years that followed, whether in office or out of it, he was the steady advocate of coercion for Ireland. But in 1843 he was for the second time Prime Minister, and was face to face with a menacing agitation under O'Connell. It was useless to ignore the fact that coercion had not pacified Ireland, that she was still discontented, that her discontent found expression in outrage, and that outrages arose from agrarian disputes. For the purpose of ascertaining how far the land system was responsible for discontent and disturbance, and if Parliament might with public advantage interfere, Peel in 1843 appointed a Commission, and in 1845 it issued its report. The five commissioners were all landlords—Sir R. Ferguson, Messrs. Redington, Wynne and Hamilton being Irish, and the chairman, Lord Devon, being an Englishman, with an Irish property; and from a landlord commission O'Connell expected little. He thought it would be as reasonable to consult butchers about the Lenten fast as to consult landlords about the rights of farmers.<sup>2</sup> His judgment was not much at fault. Under an old custom the Ulster tenants might sell the goodwill of their holdings, and had fixity of tenure as long as their rents were paid; and an obvious recommendation would be to extend these proprietary rights to the tenants of the other provinces, especially as the arrangement in Ulster had worked well. But the Devon Commissioners, regarding the Ulster custom as an encroachment on landlord rights, did not wish it extended, and they refused to countenance any restriction of the landlord's power to capriciously raise rents and evict, nor had they a word of condemnation for absentees. But they recognized the extreme poverty of the lower classes, the exactions of the middlemen and the unsatisfactory nature of the relations between them and their tenants; and while they wished congestion to be relieved by emigration, and

<sup>1</sup> Mitchel, *History of Ireland*, ii. 150; Bryce, pp. 233-5.

<sup>2</sup> Mitchel, ii. 199; *O'Connell's Correspondence*, pp. 351-2.

labour given by reclamation of waste lands, they also recommended that tenants' improvements, in part at least, should be protected by law.

Peel's government was not likely to embark on heroic land legislation, and only the last recommendation of the Devon Commission was embodied in a Bill and introduced into the House of Lords by Stanley, now Lord Derby. He had just succeeded to his father's title, and was well known to have little sympathy with Irish tenants; and his Bill was little more than a shadow. A Commissioner of Improvements was to be appointed to whom the tenant was to apply when about to improve. If the tenant failed to notify the Commissioner, if having notified he failed to get his approval, or if his improvement was neither building nor draining nor fencing, in all these cases he got nothing. Yet even this miserable Bill the Lords would not have, and so strong was their hostility to it that it was withdrawn. A similar measure was introduced in the following year by Lord Lincoln; but Peel's ministry was turned out of office on the Irish Coercion Bill, and thus time was not given for forcing Stanley's Bill into law. For the remaining years of his life Peel was out of office, and had therefore no further opportunity as a minister of handling the thorny subject of Irish land.<sup>1</sup>

In 1841 there were 491,000 Irish families living in mud-hovels with only one hearth, forty-three per cent of the entire agricultural tenantry living in one-roomed houses. In 1847 the number of small holdings exceeded 1,300,000, about a million being less than five acres in extent, and nearly 700,000 under one acre.<sup>2</sup> The operation of Mr. Gregory's quarter-acre clause in the case of those needing outdoor relief soon left many of these holdings unoccupied, and thousands of the mud-hovels were emptied or destroyed by fever and hunger. But these agents of depopulation were not enough to satisfy the impatience of the landlords. Tenants from whom

<sup>1</sup> Walpole's *England*, iv. 255-8.

<sup>2</sup> O'Brien, *Fifty Years of Concessions to Ireland*, ii. 146-7; Bryce, p. 207.



the last farthing might be squeezed were tolerated, because they were more profitable on the land than cattle ; but tenants who could pay no rent, who entered the workhouses or received outdoor relief, and as such were a burden upon the land, were worse than the barren fig-tree, and deserving of a similar fate ; and the great clearances were continued throughout the famine, and long after the famine had passed away. Pity and kindness the vast majority of landlords had never shown where their tenantry were concerned, and they showed neither now. In the depths of winter as in summer, whole families—the sick, the infirm, the aged—were ruthlessly cast out, and often when not a penny of rent was due. In one Union 6000 families were evicted in a single year. On one small estate 120 houses were levelled ; on another, 23 in a single day ; in a fortnight 1200 persons were made homeless ; within a few months 1000 cabins were thrown down ; whole districts were cleared to make way for larger farms. Forbidden to use the ruined houses from which they had been driven, the evicted lived behind hedges and ditches until cold and hunger drove them to the workhouse. In one case five families lived in a single room only twelve feet square ; in a piggery five feet by four a widow and her three children lived for three weeks ; a woman ill of dysentery lay down in a cow-shed, and the inspector coming to see her was ankle-deep in mud. Even such lodging as this the landlords grudged. They ordered the evicted to be cleared off their properties, and prohibited the tenants still remaining from taking them in. Any shelter put up was pulled down, and in one case a temporary hut of this kind was set on fire by the landlord's bailiff, while the evicted tenant was at the relief works and his wife and children were gathering shell-fish on the neighbouring strand. All this happened in the Kilrush Union within the year ending May 1849, and is taken from a Government inspector's unadorned and unemotional report. On a bleak hillside in Galway on New Year's Eve, in the midst of a violent storm, a whole family was thrown out. For the sake of their children who were sick the parents begged even one night's shelter, but they begged

in vain. And there were thousands of other cases rivalling these in barbarity.<sup>1</sup>

There were words of sympathy in Parliament and even of indignation; and an Act was passed providing that forty-eight hours' notice of an eviction should be given the relieving officer, that no eviction could take place between sunset and sunrise, nor on Good Friday or Christmas Day. But there was no real redress of grievances, no staying of the evictor's hand. Sharman Crawford's Land Bills of 1848 and 1850, extending the Ulster custom to all Ireland, were rejected with scorn, and even the milder measures of the Irish Secretary, Lord Lincoln, were not passed.<sup>2</sup> Mild as these latter were, they were looked at askance by Lord John Russell; and as for Sharman Crawford's Bills, he declared them to be subversive of the rights of property, measures which no Government with a sense of justice could pass.<sup>3</sup> But he passed a Coercion Act in 1847 and another in 1848, and the latter was renewed in the two following years. And the Act providing notice to be given of every eviction was easily evaded, and the great clearances went on with all their attendant horrors.

The fact was that British statesmen of both parties viewed with complacency this thinning of the Irish peasantry, and thought that if in addition the bankrupt landlords were replaced by solvent ones, and especially by solvent Englishmen, there would be no further need for legislative interference in the question of Irish land. Many of the Irish landlords, indeed, had not the power to do good, even if they wished. Spendthrifts themselves, or inheriting an encumbered estate from spendthrift ancestors, they were hampered at every turn by restrictions which went back to feudal times, by entail and primogeniture and complication of title; their payments to mortgagees or to members of their own family swallowed up their entire income; and necessity itself, and often inclina-

<sup>1</sup> *Parnell Movement*, pp. 54-77; O'Brien, ii. 426.

<sup>2</sup> *Two Centuries of Irish History*, p. 427.

<sup>3</sup> *Parnell Movement*, p. 73.



tion as well, compelled them to deal harshly with their tenants. But if Englishmen with money took their place, these would set up in Ireland the relations of mutual help and forbearance which existed between English landlords and their tenants, and all would be well. With this hope the Encumbered Estates Act passed into law in 1849.<sup>1</sup> It set up a Court of Commissioners authorized to deal with encumbered estates in Ireland, to sell them on the petition of owner or creditor, to apportion the price between the different claimants, to grant a title to the purchaser indefeasible in law. Under its provisions, within a few years property to the extent of £20,000,000 changed hands. Yet it was a failure. On the one hand, injustice was done to the occupying tenants, for no account was taken of the improvements they might have effected. On the other, the owners suffered, for the amount of land offered for sale exceeded the demand, and many estates were sold for less than their value. Nor did many English purchasers come. In the vast majority of cases the new men were Irish and of the shopkeeping class—men ambitious to be enrolled among the aristocracy. They bought land with the trader's instinct for profit; they bought as they bought their tea, in the cheapest market, and as a good investment; they had no care and no feeling for the tenants, whom they rack-rented and evicted without scruple; and the only effect of the Encumbered Estates Act was to set up a new and meaner class of tyrants in place of those it had pulled down.<sup>2</sup>

When the year 1850 dawned the outlook was dark. The famine had not yet quite spent itself, and more than 240,000 persons filled the workhouses. Rents were raised, even in Ulster, and in spite of the Ulster custom the clearances went on. The tide of emigration rose higher and higher. The population was rapidly dwindling, and all over the country cattle and sheep were being substituted for men. From Lord John Russell nothing could be got but coercion; and nothing

<sup>1</sup> *Annual Register*, pp. 86-90.

<sup>2</sup> O'Brien, *Fifty Years of Concessions to Ireland*, ii. 150-51; *Parnell Movement*, pp. 68-69; Perraud, pp. 164-8.

could be effected in Parliament by the corrupt and incapable men whom the Irish electors sent there. Driven to desperation, the peasants had recourse to secret societies. There had been a long succession of them—Whiteboys, Whitefeet, Terryalts, Rockites, Ribbonmen and others; but by this time the Ribbon Society had distanced all its rivals—like Aaron's rod it had swallowed up them all. With its lodges, its secret meetings, its oaths and passwords and signs, it had extended over the land. Recruited from the peasantry, it watched the peasant's interests and avenged his wrongs, and the landlord or agent who pulled down the peasant's cabin was laid low by the Ribbonman's avenging hand.<sup>1</sup> These methods, however, were abhorrent to many of the tenants' best friends, and in 1850 a Tenant Defence Society was formed at Callan in Kilkenny, and within a few months similar societies were formed elsewhere, some of them in Ulster. Holding their meetings public and keeping within the law, they relied on mutual co-operation, on the pressure of public opinion, on having honest representatives in Parliament. If only these various associations would combine into one national organization, if north and south would agree to sink their differences for the tenant's sake, much could be done; and in the hope of forming such an organization, a circular was sent broadcast, signed by men of different religions, and asking the tenants' friends to meet in Dublin.

This Tenant Right Conference met in the City Assembly Rooms, William Street, on the 6th of August, and was a remarkable gathering. For the moment the Boyne was bridged, and north and south were brought together. The chairman of the meeting was Dr. MacNight, the Presbyterian proprietor of the *Banner of Ulster*. Scattered around the room were tenants, a few liberal landlords, Presbyterian ministers and Catholic priests; Mr. Godkin, the editor of the Protestant *Derry Standard*; Mr. Maguire of the Catholic *Cork Examiner*; Mr. Greer, an Ulster Presbyterian lawyer; Dr. Gray of the *Freeman*, and Mr. Duffy of the *Nation*, both of whom had

<sup>1</sup> *New Ireland*, chap. iv.



shared imprisonment with O'Connell; Mr. Frederick Lucas, the Catholic editor of the Catholic *Tablet*. The last named was probably the ablest of them all. An English barrister and a Quaker, he had become a convert to Catholicism, and in 1840 the editor of the *Tablet*, then for the first time established as the organ of the English Catholics. His great ability as a writer, his immense information, his manly and militant attitude when abuses were to be attacked or rights to be redressed, soon made his paper a power. But the vigour with which he assailed England's treatment of Ireland, his support of Repeal, his admiration for O'Connell, his fierce onslaughts on the Irish landlords and his outspoken sympathy with their rack-rented tenants made him enemies among the high-placed English Catholics, and in 1850 he and the *Tablet* moved to Dublin.<sup>1</sup> At the head of a great Irish newspaper, he appealed to a larger audience and became more powerful than ever. The Irish landlords he considered utterly hopeless; he would as soon expect to see them reformed as to see the devil kneeling at the footstool of God.<sup>2</sup> Nor had he any hope that anything would, or could, be done for the tenants with such a party as was then in Parliament—a party of self-seekers and place-hunters, incapable, dishonest and insincere. He believed, however, that if they were replaced by honest and independent men much could be done; that any association which would send to Parliament even twelve members of capacity and practical skill would revolutionize the Imperial Parliament on Irish affairs.<sup>3</sup> These views found ready acceptance at the Tenant Right Conference, and besides the resolutions passed demanding for the tenants fixity of tenure, fair rents and free sale, and an equitable arrangement regarding arrears which had accumulated during the famine, it was also resolved that henceforth all Parliamentary candidates should pledge themselves to be independent and oppose any and every British party which refused to concede the tenants' demands.<sup>4</sup>

During the next twelve months a vigorous propaganda was

<sup>1</sup> Edward Lucas's *Life of Lucas*, i. 370.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 256.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 315.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* 385.

carried on both in the Press and on the platform ; the Tenant Right movement made great strides, and in the General Election of 1852 forty members were returned pledged to Tenant Rights and Independent Opposition. Lucas was returned for Meath, Gavan Duffy for New Ross, John Francis Maguire for Dungarvan, George Henry Moore for Mayo—all men of the highest attainments, and all men of unblemished honour. The General Election over, the new Irish party met in Dublin, and a resolution was carried, with only one dissentient, declaring it essential “that all members returned on Tenant Right principles should hold themselves perfectly independent, and in opposition to all Governments which do not make it part of their policy, and a Cabinet question, to give to the tenantry of Ireland a measure embodying the principles of Mr. Sharman Crawford’s Bill.”<sup>1</sup>

In the meantime other events happened which already had proved hurtful, and in the end proved ruinous to the tenants’ cause. Towards the close of 1850 the Pope changed the titles of the English hierarchy into archbishops and bishops of English places, from being archbishops and bishops *in partibus infidelium*. Dr. Wiseman, raised to the Cardinalate, became Archbishop of Westminster, and as such wrote a pastoral “given out of the Flaminian gate at Rome,” and announcing that henceforth he was to rule the Catholics of Middlesex, Hertford, Essex and other counties named.<sup>2</sup> In all this there was no interference with the English State Church, and in fact Cardinal Wiseman, as Archbishop of Westminster, had no more extended powers over the English Catholics of the counties named than he had as Archbishop *in partibus infidelium*. But the English Protestant always prides himself on his Protestantism, and sometimes on his hatred of the Pope ; the loss of Newman and others in recent years had made him irritable ; and the sight of a Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster appeared to his excited vision as the destruction of the work done at the Reformation. The Queen was to be dethroned, the fires of Smithfield to be rekindled, the Scarlet Woman to

<sup>1</sup> *New Ireland*, pp. 147-52, 167.

<sup>2</sup> Lucas, i. 417-20.



be set on high in Protestant England. The Bishop of Durham wrote a letter to the Premier complaining of these acts of Papal aggression, and Lord John Russell replied that it was certainly intolerable.<sup>1</sup> He denounced the Pope's action as insolent and insidious, inconsistent with the Queen's supremacy and with the rights of the English bishops, and declared that England would not submit her mind and conscience to a foreign yoke. The Durham Letter was interpreted as a declaration of war against the Catholic Church, and a storm of fierce fanaticism arose which recalled the days of Titus Oates and Lord George Gordon. The Protestant Bishops publicly expressed their indignation; their clergy were not behindhand in vehemence and clamour; the Corporation of London and the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge presented loyal addresses to the throne; the Sheriffs held County meetings, where language of the coarsest insult was used; the lower classes burned the Pope and Cardinal Wiseman in effigy;<sup>2</sup> and when Parliament met in the following February, a Bill was promised to make penal the "recent assumptions of ecclesiastical titles conferred by a Foreign Power."<sup>3</sup>

Some of the finest intellects in the English Protestant Church were disgusted at this hysterical bigotry, believing it to be without reason and without justice, and utterly unworthy of a great nation; and when the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill was introduced into Parliament, it was launched on a tempestuous sea. Lord Aberdeen would give no support to what was a penal law; Lord Brougham presented petitions against it; Sir James Graham's attitude was that of Lord Aberdeen; Mr. Roundell Palmer could not see that it was called for; Mr. Gladstone denounced it as opposed to the principles of religious liberty; Mr. Roebuck failed to understand how, if Cardinal Wiseman chose to put on a big hat and red stockings, he was thereby making any aggression on the Queen's prerogative. The Irish members assailed the Bill; the bigots wanted a stringent penal law; and Lord John Russell, deserted by his

<sup>1</sup> *Annual Register*, 1851 (copy of letter).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 1850, pp. 198-201; *Chronicle*, pp. 138-52.    <sup>3</sup> *Annual Register*, p. 3.

friends, despised by his foes, trembling for the existence of his ministry, which his own folly had imperilled, consented to changes and modifications, until at last the only penal provision left was one prohibiting, under a penalty of £100, any archbishop, bishop or dean of the Catholic Church assuming a title from any place in the United Kingdom. Thus amended the Bill became law.<sup>1</sup> But it was never enforced. With characteristic boldness Dr. MacHale at once wrote a public letter signing himself, as he had hitherto, "John, Archbishop of Tuam," and he did so with impunity. The storm of bigotry had then died down in England; Lord John shrank from prosecuting an archbishop, and *Punch* of that day described him as having written up "No Popery" on the walls, and then having run away from what he had written.

Had Ireland followed the example of Dr. MacHale it would have been better. The time was past when penal laws could be enforced, and Ireland, which had withstood the fury of the Penal Code, ought to have treated the Ecclesiastical Titles Act with dignified contempt. A different attitude, however, was adopted. The whole country was agitated with groundless alarms and groundless fears, as if the eighteenth century could be brought back to life and the horrors of the penal times could be renewed. Meetings were held, speeches made, fiery resolutions passed, letters and articles in newspapers written, and a Catholic Defence Association was formed.<sup>2</sup> This new body was disliked by the Tenant Right League, as being likely to revive sectarian rancour in the popular ranks, and thus cause division and weakness. But by a small group of Irish members of Parliament it was welcomed. The hypocrite often hides his treachery under the cloak of religious zeal, and these men were now all for religion. They fought the Titles Bill inch by inch, exhausted all the resources of Parliament in obstructing it, and while they were regarded at home as the Irish Brigade, fighting as of old the battles of Ireland abroad, by Englishmen they were derisively referred to as the Pope's

<sup>1</sup> *Annual Register*, pp. 7, 43-75; *Chronicle*, pp. 457-9 (copy of the Act).

<sup>2</sup> Lucas, i. 451-3.



Brass Band. They were few in number, the chief of them being John Sadleir and William Keogh.

The former was a solicitor with a capacity for finance, and with social and political ambitions, and disdaining the humble rôle of a country attorney, he entered Parliament in 1847, settled in London, became a Company promoter and director and a familiar figure on the Stock Exchange, and established a bank with many branches in his native Tipperary. Neither an orator nor a debater, he was credited with great financial ability and enormous wealth. He established a paper, the *Telegraph*, which was ultra-Catholic in tone; brought two cousins and a nephew into Parliament; and when the General Election of 1852 was over, the whole Brigade, eight in number, were his followers, and most of them, if not all, looked to him for pecuniary support.

Intellectually Keogh was Sadleir's superior, and was cast in a very different mould. A barrister without briefs, a lawyer ignorant of law, careless, convivial, unprincipled, impecunious and intemperate, he had much of the vulgar demagogue and much of the bravo in his composition. Fluent of speech, he excelled in the turmoil of a contested election. His energy of voice and gesture, his strength of language, his readiness of repartee, his coarse humour, his flattery of national and even local prejudices, his reckless courage captivated the mob; the use of bribery, with borrowed money, did the rest; and in 1847, and again in 1852, he was returned for Athlone. At the latter date it was noticed that Keogh and his friends were reluctant to join the Tenant League or embarrass themselves by pledges about Independent Opposition. But the tenants were in no humour to be cajoled by fulsome adulation of Catholic ecclesiastics and loud protestations of attachment to the Catholic Church. The fact was that the Brigadiers were distrusted, and attacked by the national journals—the *Tablet*, the *Nation* and the *Freeman's Journal*; and when one of their number, Dr. Power, M.P. for Cork, became Governor of St. Lucia, the cry was raised that all were place-hunters, and at a meeting in Cork, Keogh was attacked to his face. But his

audacity was boundless. He indignantly repelled the charges made against him; declared, as he had at other meetings already, that he cared nothing for Whigs or Tories, and would support neither unless they did justice to the tenants. He had supported Sharman Crawford's Bill, and promised with an oath that he and his friends would always give it "an unflinching, undeviating, unalterable support." All doubts disappeared when the whole Brigade attended the Tenant Right Conference at the close of the election, and when Keogh himself proposed the resolution pledging the whole party to Tenant Right and Independent Opposition.<sup>1</sup>

There were then three parties in England—the Tories, the Whigs and the Peelites. The last named, having separated from the main body of the Tories in 1846 on the question of the repeal of the Corn Laws, had since maintained a separate existence, and were still called Peelites, though Peel himself had died in 1850. With such able men as Gladstone and Graham and Sidney Herbert, they were strong in talent though too weak in numbers to form a Government, and on most public questions they acted with the Whigs. On the Ecclesiastical Tithes Bill, however, the Peelites and Whigs disagreed; and Lord John Russell, weakened by that mischievous measure, was turned out of office in February 1852, and was replaced by the Tories under Derby and Disraeli.<sup>2</sup> The General Election of that year gave the latter a compact party of more than 300, a party stronger than either Whigs or Peelites—almost as strong as a combination of both—yet not strong enough to carry on the Government. Unable to attract Peelite support, the Tories looked to the Tenant Right Party, and in the hope of obtaining their co-operation the Irish Attorney-General, Mr. Napier, introduced a Land Bill. It was a distinct advance on the preceding Bills, for it contained provisions compensating the tenant for his improvements in case of disturbance. Because of this and because the Bill, being a Tory one, was sure to pass the House of Lords, Lucas and

<sup>1</sup> *New Ireland*, pp. 158-67; *Parnell Movement*, pp. 92-98.

<sup>2</sup> *Greville's Memoirs*, vi. 455, 460.



Duffy favoured its acceptance ; but Keogh denounced it as worthless, and was able to carry a majority of the Tenant Righters with him ; and on Disraeli's budget the Irish joined the Opposition, and the Tories were driven from office. A coalition Government of Whigs and Peelites was then formed under Lord Aberdeen,<sup>1</sup> and in Ireland there were high hopes that Independent Opposition would do great things, and that a better Bill even than Napier's would be secured. These hopes were soon blighted. When the list of the minor appointments in the new Government was published, just as the New Year dawned, it was discovered that Keogh was Irish Solicitor-General, John Sadleir a Lord of the Treasury, Edmond O'Flaherty a Commissioner of Income Tax, and Monsel, Clerk of the Ordnance.<sup>2</sup> They had taken office without consulting their colleagues of the Tenant Right Party, and without obtaining any promise of legislation from the Government ; they had justified the suspicions of Lucas and Duffy, who had disliked them from the beginning, and the country which believed in them they had shamefully betrayed.<sup>3</sup>

Such treachery could not be permitted to pass unpunished, and when Sadleir presented himself for re-election at Carlow the Tenant Righters supported his Tory opponent, placing the latter at the head of the poll.<sup>4</sup> It was at least equally important to punish Keogh, but the opposition given to him was ineffective, and he was returned for Athlone ; and Sadleir soon found a seat in Sligo town, where mobs were ready to cheer him for money, and electors ready to sell their votes. Had the Tenant Righters and clergy acted together this would not be, and other members of Parliament would have been debarred from following the example set by Sadleir and Keogh. But the Tenant League had begun already to dissolve. The Ulster men as Presbyterians had a friendly feeling for the Presbyterian Lord John Russell, and were reluctant to embarrass him. Some of them also disliked Lucas, whom they regarded as a

<sup>1</sup> *Greville*, vii. 29.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 27.

<sup>3</sup> *New Ireland*, p. 168.

<sup>4</sup> *Moore Hall Papers*—Moore to Sadleir, Jan. 1853—a scathing indictment of Sadleir's public conduct.

bigoted Catholic ; and nothing could be more repugnant to a Presbyterian with the old Puritan intolerance of Popery. And there were others, not so disinterested, who wished to stand well with Keogh, the Solicitor-General, and perhaps get one of the many offices it would be in his power to give. On the Catholic side, John O'Connell continued to support Lord John Russell, even after his Durham Letter ; and however worthless John O'Connell himself might be, the name of O'Connell was one to conjure with, and the son of the liberator was sure to have supporters among the electorate and imitators in Parliament.<sup>1</sup> But the most serious defection was that of the priests. Dispirited by the failure and death of O'Connell and the horrors of the famine, with the whole resources of Government and a powerful aristocracy against them, the people were powerless without their aid ; and it was because of that aid that the Tenant League had been established, and that so many Tenant Right candidates at the elections had headed the polls. Now the clergy were divided, and a large number of them had gone over to the enemy. Priests fought for Sadleir at Sligo, and for the Government candidate Fortescue in Louth ; and at Athlone the Bishop of Elphin, Dr. Browne, openly supported Keogh.

Their conduct was approved by the new Archbishop of Dublin, Paul Cullen. Within certain limits he was an able man. He knew much of theology and canon law, of Scripture and Church history, was absolutely and unselfishly devoted to the interests of his Church ; a man of great piety and zeal, of strength of will and tenacity of purpose. But outside his merely professional knowledge his general reading was not extensive : on many subjects he was ill-informed ; his political views were narrow and illiberal ; he could see but one side of a question, and slowly assimilated new ideas.<sup>2</sup> Educated at Rome, he became Rector of the Irish College, was appointed

<sup>1</sup> *Moore Hall Papers*—Moore to the *Nation*, Jan. 1853, showing that but twenty Irish members voted against the Titles Bill.

<sup>2</sup> Vide *The Writings of Cardinal Cullen*, edited by Dr. Moran, Dublin, 1882.



Archbishop of Armagh in 1849, and in 1852, on the death of Dr. Murray, became Archbishop of Dublin. At the same time he was appointed Apostolic Delegate, a position which gave him a supervising authority over the whole Catholic Church in Ireland, and made him all-powerful at Rome. At Armagh he favoured the Tenant League; but at Dublin his policy was changed, and he soon was much more friendly with Sadleir and Keogh than with Duffy and Lucas. A mind never liberal had received a fatal bias from the scenes of violence and crime he saw in Rome in 1849, when a liberal-minded Pope was driven from the city by Garibaldi and Mazzini, at the head of atheists and assassins. With a horror of popular movements, he regarded the Young Irelanders as on the same level with the Italian Carbonari; the Tenant League nothing more than the Young Ireland movement revived; and Duffy he called the Irish Mazzini. He seemed to have a distrust of superior ability, and to have disliked Lucas because of his courage and capacity. Priests and bishops who were outspoken and independent he specially disliked. He expected that all, even the archbishops, should submit to his guidance; and when a diocese became vacant, he wished that no one should be appointed but one whose views were subservient to his own. He carefully noted what priests attended Tenant Right meetings, and then promptly pointed out to their bishops what their duty was. Father Doyle of Ross, for instance, was changed to an obscure mission in 1853,<sup>1</sup> and a little later Father O'Shea and Father Keefe, both of Callan, were interdicted from attending public meetings at all.<sup>2</sup> But Dr. Cullen had no objection to bishops and priests who supported the Government candidates. He had no word of condemnation for Dr. Browne of Elphin for supporting Keogh at Athlone, nor for the priests who aided Sadleir in Carlow and Sligo, and none for those who stood by Fortescue in Louth. His system was to centralize all power in himself, to have bishops, priests, and laymen, even in politics, obedient to his will. "There was to be," said a nationalist journal, "no Priests in politics—except Bishops;

<sup>1</sup> Duffy, *Four Years of Irish History*, pp. 246-9.      <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 320-22.

no Bishops in politics—except Archbishops; no Archbishops in politics except the Apostolic Delegate.”<sup>1</sup>

It was widely believed that Dr. Cullen's policy had the approbation of the Pope, but the Tenant Righters did not share this belief. The heart of Pio Nono was kind, and they thought that if the whole truth was placed before him, he would distinguish between the Roman leaders, Mazzini and Garibaldi, and the Irish ones, Duffy and Lucas, between the Carbonari and Tenant Righters; he would recognize that the latter had the strong faith of their ancestors and their warm attachment to the See of Peter, and that in defending such against the proselytizer and the evictor the Irish priests were treading in the footsteps of that divine Master who hunted the money-changers from the Temple and uttered so many woes against the Pharisees. It was therefore resolved to appeal to the Pope, and with the approval of the Tenant Righters, lay and clerical, Lucas left for Rome early in 1855. His honesty and sincerity, his zeal for religion, his courage, his splendid abilities marked him out as the ablest champion they could select. Disdaining to answer the charge of being a bad Catholic or associated with such, he vigorously attacked Dr. Cullen's political conduct, charged him with duplicity, with a want of charity and candour and truth towards those whom he opposed, and undoubtedly he made a strong case. Both Cardinal Wiseman and Dr. MacHale, who were then at Rome, were impressed and convinced by it, and had he lived he might have convinced the Pope.<sup>2</sup> But he complained that he received little support from the Irish priests. Reluctant, no doubt, to bring trouble on themselves or their bishops, they shrank from coming into conflict with Dr. Cullen, who was determined and tenacious, and had such influence at Rome that it seemed hopeless to contend with him. In addition to this Lucas got ill, and

<sup>1</sup> Duffy, p. 377.

<sup>2</sup> *Moore Hall Papers*—Lucas to Moore, Rome, 4th May 1855. At that date Lucas was hopeful of success. “I am in very good spirits and very good hope. I think the case stands very well if I am not unlucky enough to spoil it by my long statement. Long as it is, I am assured the Pope will himself read it and consider it before sending it to Propaganda.”



the fact that he met with such discouragement, and was unable to complete his case at Rome, weighed so heavily on his spirits that he had to return to England. In the month of October following he died at Staines. His love for Ireland was as great as that of Drummond, and with equal truth he might say that he lost his life in her service.<sup>1</sup>

A few months later, Mr. Duffy resigned his seat in Parliament and sailed for Australia. With the clergy prohibited from supporting the popular movement, it could not endure; with pledge-breaking allowed to go unpunished, a Parliamentary party was a sham; and already of those members who had been elected in 1852 to support Tenant Right and Independent Opposition, twenty-seven had gone over to the Government.<sup>2</sup> In these circumstances, to rouse the people to renewed activity and recreate an efficient Parliamentary party would have required the genius of O'Connell. Duffy felt unequal to the task, as he felt convinced that nothing could be done by Parliamentary action until existing conditions were changed, and hence he left Ireland for a distant land. There yet remained Mr. G. H. Moore, the member for Mayo. A country gentleman with cultured tastes, a landlord who sympathized with the tenants, a politician but not a place-hunter, he sought for no favour from any party, and made no promises to the people which he did not keep. With many years' Parliamentary experience, he had an accurate knowledge of public questions and of the temper of Parliament, could speak perhaps better than Lucas and write as eloquently as Duffy, and at the head of a party would have been a much more effective Parliamentary leader than either. But these great qualities were marred by serious defects, and Duffy, whose admiration for his abilities was unbounded, describes him as impatient of labour, of contradiction and of dulness. He wanted tenacity of purpose, the patience to wait for results that might be long in coming, the conviction of ultimate success which inspires even a beaten party with hope. His contempt for mediocrity must have often lost him the support of men who could do useful,

<sup>1</sup> *Life of Lucas*, ii. 143-470.

<sup>2</sup> *League of North and South*, pp. 322-4.

though not brilliant work; his sarcasm was often bitter and not easily forgiven; and in debate he often irritated rather than convinced his opponents.<sup>1</sup> Yet he was for many years a large figure in politics, and when Lucas was dead and Duffy in exile, Moore was almost the only man in Parliament to whom Ireland could with confidence appeal.

During these years the changes of Government were frequent, and the state of English parties was such that the Irish members, had they acted together, might have done much. Having the balance of power, they could have defeated Aberdeen as they had defeated Derby, for the Coalition Ministry was one of "suspended opinions and smothered animosities,"<sup>2</sup> and could have been easily overthrown. Palmerston's first Ministry, which succeeded in 1855, was soon weakened by the secession of its ablest members, Gladstone, Graham and Bright, and though strengthened by the General Election of 1857, it was defeated in the next year, and succeeded by the Derby-Disraeli Government, which, however, only lasted for a single year.

Palmerston's second Ministry lasted from 1859 till his death in 1865—a long time, with only a majority of twenty.<sup>3</sup> His strength lay in the fact that an Irish Independent Party had ceased to exist, and that the Tories tolerated him. He was in fact more opposed to reform than most of themselves, and his meddlesome foreign policy, his bragging about England's power, and his insolent hectoring of foreign nations, made him generally popular with the masses at home.

Mr. Keogh remained unaffected by these changes. He saw no reason to sacrifice office for principles, and Lord Aberdeen's Solicitor-General became Attorney-General and Judge under Palmerston. His confederates of the Brass Band were less fortunate. In 1854 Edmond O'Flaherty, Commissioner of Income Tax, fled the country, leaving in circulation forged bills amounting to £15,000. Two years later John Sadleir committed suicide, having ruined thousands of Munster

<sup>1</sup> Duffy, pp. 227-8.

<sup>2</sup> *Annual Register*, 1855.

<sup>3</sup> *Ashley's Life*, ii.



farmers who had invested their money in his bank. In the next year James Sadleir, having been found guilty of fraud, was expelled from Parliament.<sup>1</sup> The other pledge-breakers did not fare so well as Keogh nor as badly as Sadleir, though they were equally corrupt, and equally the slaves of Government. The result was that Irish grievances remained unredressed. At the election of 1857 Mr. Moore was elected for Mayo, but was unseated on petition, and two years later he was defeated at Kilkenny.<sup>2</sup> There remained about half-a-dozen who could be relied on, and of these only Mr. Maguire, who sat for Dungarvan, was a man of much capacity. So forgotten was Ireland in Parliament that it was rarely mentioned in the Queen's Speech; and Sergeant Shee's Land Bill of 1855, Mr. Moore's of the two following years, and Mr. Maguire's of 1858 were all rejected. Palmerston's Ministry in 1860 passed a Bill giving the tenants compensation for future improvements, provided such were made with the express consent of the landlords.<sup>3</sup> No further concessions would be given, and Lord Palmerston declared in 1865, a few weeks before his death, that he utterly repudiated the doctrine of Tenant Right, and that in his view tenant right was landlord wrong.<sup>4</sup>

In the meantime Dr. Cullen, who had supported the Whigs in 1855, supported the Tories in 1859; but though he earned the goodwill of Government by doing so, and the praises of the Tories, he was unable to obtain concessions either from Whigs or Tories. In spite of Catholic objections to the composition of the National Board of Education and to the character of some of the school-books, it was not until 1853 that Whateley's books were disallowed, and not until 1860 were the Catholic Commissioners made equal in number to the Protestant. And the Catholic demand for denominational schools, where only Catholic children were taught, was emphatically refused. The rich Protestant Church, with its enormous revenues, had its rich Royal Free Schools and its Erasmus Smith Schools, while

<sup>1</sup> *Parnell Movement*, pp. 106-10.

<sup>2</sup> *Moore Hall Papers*—Speech of Mr. Moore at Kilkenny, June 1859.

<sup>3</sup> *Annual Register*, p. 202.

<sup>4</sup> Barry O'Brien, ii. 282-90, 304-5.

the Catholic Church had to depend on its diocesan colleges, but not a penny would Parliament grant to redress the inequality. The Queen's Colleges were maintained and endowed, though a Papal Rescript in 1847 described them as "involving grave danger to the faith of Catholics"; a second Rescript in 1848 declared this danger to be intrinsic; and a third in 1850 warned the bishops to keep Catholic students from their doors.<sup>1</sup> Even a Catholic University, set up and maintained by the Catholics in their poverty, was refused a charter by Lord Palmerston, on the ground that the institution was and would be controlled by Dr. Cullen.<sup>2</sup> There was no attempt made to relieve the Catholics of the oppressive burden of the Established Church, nor was there any attempt made to equitably adjust the relations between landlord and tenant: the result was that a fierce land war raged, in which a small class seemed bent on the extermination of the masses.

From 1849 to 1856 a million and a half had emigrated, one-fifth of whom had been actually evicted. The strong and healthy were thus leaving the shores of Ireland, and her population, which in 1851 stood at 6,500,000, was reduced in 1861 to 5,760,000.<sup>3</sup> The *Times* wrote exultingly that in another generation the Irish Celts would be as obsolete in Ireland as the Phoenicians in Cornwall, and the Catholic religion as forgotten as the worship of Astarte.<sup>4</sup>

When an Irish property was advertised for sale in the Landed Estates Court, it was regularly mentioned as an inducement to purchasers that the tenants had no leases.<sup>5</sup> It was assumed that the incoming landlord would care nothing for the tenants, and would raise the rents or evict as best suited his purpose. And all over the country tenants were being evicted for non-payment of an impossible rent, for voting against his landlord, for refusing to send his children to the Protestant schools, for getting his daughter married

<sup>1</sup> Locker-Sampson, p. 353.

<sup>2</sup> Ashley's *Palmerston*, ii. 266-7.

<sup>3</sup> *Annual Register; Chronicle*, p. 52.

<sup>4</sup> Duffy's *League of North and South*, p. 271.

<sup>5</sup> Godkin's *Land War in Ireland*, p. 326.



without the previous permission of his landlord, for giving a night's lodging to a stranger, for harbouring an evicted tenant. Tenants were turned out who owed no rent, and turned out in all kinds of weather, and with their whole families—the sick, the aged, the fatherless orphan, the mother with her new-born babe. And those not evicted had to submit to conditions which only slaves could have endured ; to the exactions of the landlord, the insolence of the agent, the brutality of the bailiff, the insults of every menial whom the landlord or agent employed. It was not in human nature that these things could be patiently borne, and the harassed tenant, having no hope from Parliament, looked to the Ribbon lodges for vengeance, and he looked not in vain.<sup>1</sup> The evicting landlord or his agent, the over-officious bailiff, the grabber who occupied an evicted holding had one and all need to tremble, and often fell beneath the assassin's hand, and generally unpitied by the people. In Armagh a land-agent was stoned to death in open day, and his murderers, caught red-handed, were acquitted ; in Monaghan an agent was beaten to death ; in Cavan, a lady ; in Westmeath a grabber was shot dead in the presence of three men, who refused to aid the murdered man as he fell mortally wounded ; in Clare a landlord's house was set on fire, and house and occupant burned to ashes.<sup>2</sup> A generous and kindly people, maddened by oppression, were being turned into ferocious savages. And yet Parliament would not interfere. But when Palmerston was dead, reaction and privilege lost their stoutest champion ; Russell and Gladstone were well known to be friends of reform, and the least observant could not but see that an era of change had come—that the state of Ireland especially demanded attention, and that some attempt must be made to discover a suitable remedy for its ills.

<sup>1</sup> Perraud, pp. 95-100, 130-33.

<sup>2</sup> O'Brien, ii. 253-72.

## CHAPTER X

### *Fenianism and Reform*

IN the evidence given before the Devon Commission in 1843 the state of Ireland, as affected by its land laws, stands completely revealed. Many of the landlords were too poor to be generous or even just to their tenants. Others, hampered by law of entail, and having nothing more than a life-interest in their property, were reluctant to spend money on improvements.<sup>1</sup> A good proportion were absentees, caring as little for their tenants as for the inhabitants of Timbuctoo. The rule of the agents of these absentees was that of tyranny and not infrequently of corruption. They gave no leases, effected no improvements, seized the buildings made by the tenants, raised the rent on land he had improved, and evicted him, often from mere caprice. In spite of their landlord prejudices, the Devon Commissioners declared that the uncertainty of tenure paralyzed all exertion, and was a fatal bar to improvements.<sup>2</sup> They found that where the Ulster custom was allowed, and tenants could sell the goodwill of their farms, agrarian outrages were rare; where it was not allowed, they were common; that nearly half the holdings in Ireland were less than five acres in extent, and a large proportion of them much less; that in Kerry 66 per cent of the houses were mud-cabins with but one room, in Mayo the percentage was 62, in Cork and Clare 56, and in the rich county of Down it was 25; that the agricultural labourer everywhere was badly housed, badly fed, badly clothed, badly paid for his labour; his home was a mud-

<sup>1</sup> *Devon Commission Report*, Digest of Evidence, pp. 240-41.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 1122.



cabin, leaky and filled with smoke; his food potatoes and water; his bed the earthen floor, without a blanket to cover him; his property a pig and a heap of manure. They found that in every case of the renewal of a lease the rent was raised; that bailiffs were corrupt and often accepted bribes; that growing crops were seized for rent, a practice which they strongly condemned.<sup>1</sup> These evils were of long standing, and could not be cured at once by legislation. But Parliament could have interfered to give the tenant some sort of security of tenure; it could have stopped the common practice of subdividing holdings; it could have compelled the farmer to build better houses for his labourers; and in a country where there were nearly 4,000,000 acres of improvable waste lands, some employment might be given to redundant labour. What embittered the Irish farmers and labourers was that Parliament did nothing but watch complacently the decimation of a whole people by famine, eviction and emigration; and this while the great English newspaper, the *Times*, gloated over the Irish exodus, and gleefully announced that in a short time a Celt would be as rare in Ireland as a Red Indian on the shores of Manhattan.

As for the landlords they were hopeless. There are few men who will not abuse unlimited power, and the Irish landlords had never adopted any self-denying ordinance in dealing with the tenants. Many of these landlords had been overwhelmed in the famine, but their successors were not less ready than they to oppress and evict, and from 1850 to 1870 was the period of the great clearances. Thousands of the holdings were, it is true, utterly unable to decently support a family, and thousands of the houses levelled were utterly unfit for human habitation. And if the landlord had compensated the tenant and enabled him to emigrate, not altogether destitute and penniless, eviction would have been robbed of the worst of its terrors; and when the Irishman had attained to some measure of comfort in a foreign land,

<sup>1</sup> *Devon Commission Report*, pp. 125-6, 418-19, 489-90, 516, 988, 1027, 1132, 1152.

he might have looked back without regret to those days when he rejoiced only in misery and a mud-cabin. Instead of this he had to remember that his landlord had driven him out without compensation, caring nothing about what might be his fate. The exile's heart was sore, and neither time nor distance nor the acquisition of wealth could make him forget the day of his eviction with all its horrors. The worst cases were those—and they were many—where the tenant was sent adrift after having laboured and toiled to improve his holding, after having built and fenced and drained, after having won the bog and mountain to fertility. When all this was done the landlord cast him out, seizing on all the improvements he had made.

The *Quarterly Review* (in 1854) declared that "the cabins of the peasantry were pulled down in such numbers as to give the appearance, throughout whole regions of the south, and still more of the west, of a country devastated and desolated by the passage of a hostile army."<sup>1</sup> In Westmeath Dr. Nulty saw 700 persons evicted in a single day. In one house were patients delirious in typhus fever, but even that house was pulled down; and as the shades of night fell, the evicted, young and old, cowered under the hedges, drenched with the heavy autumnal rains.<sup>2</sup> In the county of Mayo a whole country-side was emptied of its inhabitants by Lord Lucan, and in the same county even a wider stretch of country was cleared by Lord Sligo. Mr. Pollock's clearances in Galway were equally thorough. In the lap of the Donegal Mountains, the peaceful valley of Glenveigh was (in 1861) cleared in a single day by Mr. Adair. Acting on mere suspicion, he chose to believe the inhabitants guilty of the slaughter of some of his sheep and the murder of his steward, and in spite of the remonstrances of the Protestant minister and of the Catholic priest, he evicted them all. Mr. Sullivan, who did much for the helpless people, described how a widow and her daughters, seeing their home levelled to the earth, raised such piercing cries that strong men burst into tears;

<sup>1</sup> O'Brien, ii. 267.

<sup>2</sup> *New Ireland*, pp. 122-3.



how an old man of ninety, as he walked out of his home, reverently kissed the door-posts ; and how the dispossessed people shivered in the drizzling rain round fires which they had built within sight of their levelled homes.<sup>1</sup> Thus were thousands of Irish peasants banished to foreign lands, bearing in their hearts the bitter memory of wrong ; cursing the landlords who had dispossessed them, and the English Government by which these landlords were sustained.

Not all of the landlords, however, deserved these maledictions, for not all were of the type of Mr. Adair. But those who neither evicted nor rack-rented were comparatively few, and in consequence the condition of the mass of the tenants was pitiable. In a country where industries did not flourish, the competition for land was so keen that the landlord could make his own terms. Nor did he consider the tenant in any other light than as a rent-paying machine, to have his rent raised or to suffer eviction at his landlord's good will. If he built a new house then surely he could pay more rent, and his rent was raised ; if he fenced or drained or reclaimed, the land was thereby enriched and its letting value was greater ; if he or his children dressed comfortably, it was evident that they were comfortable and would pay more rent if only the screw were put on. And there were estate rules which could be imposed only on slaves, and which only those long habituated to slavery could have endured. The tenant was compelled to vote for his landlord's nominee at elections, to send his children to the Protestant school, to get his landlord's permission to marry or to have any of his children married ; and he was prohibited from building houses for his labourers, or giving shelter to strangers.<sup>2</sup> On one small estate in Mayo, the Ormsby estate, the old tenants still tell, with blazing eyes, how the landlord fined them if a cow or ass wandered on the road or picked a blade of the landlord's grass ; how they had to work even on holidays for the landlord at half wages ; and when the harvest came, how they had to cut *his* oats during the day, and then—

<sup>1</sup> *New Ireland*, pp. 228 *et seq.*

<sup>2</sup> O'Brien, ii. 271-4.

for there was no other time available—how they had to cut their own oats by the light of the harvest moon. Even the bailiff on many estates compelled the tenants to give free labour, and thus were the bailiff's crops sown and saved. And the cases were not a few where the rent was not raised, the ejectment process withdrawn, or the eviction stayed, because the honour of a blushing and beautiful girl was sacrificed to a tyrant's lust. It was these things above all which made weak men strong and cowards brave, which made landlordism an unclean and an accursed thing, and nerved the arm of the assassin.

In spite of Lord Palmerston's landlord sympathies, such a system could not have lasted if there had been an honest and energetic body of Irish members in Parliament. But there was no such body. After 1857 Mr. G. H. Moore was without a seat until 1868. The most prominent of the popular representatives were Mr. J. F. Maguire, Mr. Martin, and The O'Donoghue, and of these Mr. Maguire only was a man of much capacity, and even he was unable to carry a popular movement to success.<sup>1</sup> Towards the end of 1864 Mr. Dillon, then returned from his American exile, started the National Association of Ireland, aided and encouraged by Dr. Cullen. But Mr. Moore would have no connexion with any movement controlled or influenced by Dr. Cullen.<sup>2</sup> Mr. Duffy, who was home on a visit from Australia, having been asked to join, also held aloof, and for the same reason as Mr. Moore; and Mr. Dillon died in 1866 before the Association had gone far.<sup>3</sup>

There were, indeed, Irish members who posed as popular leaders and advocated popular measures. And the aspiring national member during those years, as he stood upon the hustings and asked the people's votes, was glib of tongue and

<sup>1</sup> *Moore Hall Papers*. In 1861 Mr. Moore proposed to establish a new organization—that of the Irish Volunteers—but it came to nothing.

<sup>2</sup> *Writings of Cardinal Cullen*, ii. 283-320.

<sup>3</sup> Duffy's *My Life in Two Hemispheres*, ii. 268-9; *New Ireland*, pp. 307-8.



prodigal of promises as man could be. He would vote for an extension of the franchise, for land reform, for the disestablishment of the State Church; he would support no Government which failed to favour these measures, for he believed in the policy of Independent Opposition. He wanted neither place nor favour, and was satisfied if he could only serve Ireland. These promises and protestations were set off by vague talk about an oppressed people, a land of saints and heroes, and the glorious green flag. Some voters estimated this eloquence and vehemence at its worth, and taking the candidate's bribe, gave him their vote, knowing well that neither he nor his opponent was sincere. But there were others who had not yet sounded the depths of political depravity, and believing in the candidate voted in his favour. To their disgust they soon found how much they had been deceived. When the candidate entered Parliament he at once forgot his promises, scoffed at Independent Opposition, attached himself to the Government, and not a man in the party was more obedient to the crack of the party whip. His reward came in due course. A tide-waitership or a position in the Excise for his illegitimate son, a county court judgeship for a brother at the Bar, a stipendiary magistrateship for a son who was too stupid to succeed at a profession, a fat place at home or a colonial governorship for himself—this was the price given for his Parliamentary support. And if some indignant supporter charged him with his pledge-breaking and treachery, he coolly admitted his offence, chuckled at having made so good a bargain with the Government, and even thanked God that he had a country to sell.<sup>1</sup>

Such men spoke with no authority in Parliament, and were heard with no respect. Nor could Palmerston and men like him be so much blamed if they had done nothing for Ireland, seeing that the Irish voters had sent such men to the House of Commons.

It was indeed assumed by many English public men that Ireland was content and wanted no experiments in legislation. And a smooth-tongued Viceroy, Lord Carlisle, at Lord Mayor's

<sup>1</sup> *Parnell Movement*, pp. 121-3.

banquets and cattle-shows, year after year reported, like the sentinel on the watch-tower, that all was well. Crime had decreased, religious animosities were disappearing, agricultural methods were improving, education spreading among the masses, churches and schools multiplied. In ten years the number of mud-cabins had fallen from 491,000 to 125,000, and this necessarily involved the emigration of many thousands, the most vigorous and energetic of the race. But, convinced that Nature intended Ireland to be "the mother of flocks and herds," Lord Carlisle was not alarmed at this exodus. It increased the rate of wages at home, and resulted in bettering the lot of those who went and of those who remained ; as if indeed a dwindling population were proof of national prosperity rather than of national decay.<sup>1</sup> This shallow sophistry was considered good enough for the aldermen and cattle-breeders who listened to him, but it did not impose on men of intelligence and patriotism, and was little worthy of a statesman or of an honest public man. Nor was the applause with which Lord Carlisle was greeted able to silence the voice of disaffection, which at that very time turned from the platform and Parliament and sought an outlet through revolutionary channels.

As far back as 1847 a general strike against rent was preached in the *Nation* and the *Irish Felon* by James Fintan Lalor, a man of great power of expression, bold, fearless and clear-sighted, of striking and original views and of indomitable will.<sup>2</sup> In spite of the events of that and the following year he was not discouraged, and in 1849 he organized in Munster an insurrection which was even a greater fiasco than Smith O'Brien's attempt of 1848. Next year Lalor died, and nothing was attempted till 1858, when some young men in Cork and Kerry established a revolutionary society. Ostensibly for literary purposes, and called the Phoenix Literary Society, it was really a secret and oath-bound organization, pledged to overthrow British rule in Ireland by force of arms, and believing

<sup>1</sup> *Viceregal Speeches*, pp. 75, 97, 102, 159, 184.

<sup>2</sup> Duffy, *Four Years of Irish History* ; W. Dillon's *Life of Mitchel*, i. 150-52, 168-9.



that the time was opportune when England was fully occupied in putting down the Indian Mutiny. Its headquarters was at Skibbereen, its branches in West Cork and Kerry. The chief of its local leaders was Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa. But its real founder was James Stephens, who had a share in the rising of 1848, since then had lived mostly at Paris and mixed much with foreign revolutionists, and in 1858, having returned to Ireland, was acting as private tutor to a gentleman near Killarney. He was a man of good education, with a capacity for organization and secret conspiracy, believing that nothing could be done for Ireland in Parliament, but much by a strong revolutionary society watching England's difficulties and allying itself with her foes. The Phoenix Society, however, soon collapsed. The priests denounced it from the altar. Smith O'Brien and the *Nation*, then under Mr. A. M. Sullivan, publicly assailed it, and the Government arrested the leaders and had them, in 1859, tried by special commission. One prisoner, O'Sullivan, was convicted and sentenced to penal servitude ; and then O'Donovan Rossa and the others pleaded guilty and were liberated, and an end had come to the Phoenix Society.<sup>1</sup>

Stephens was not among those arrested, or perhaps suspected, and returning to Paris, began to build up a new and far more formidable society than the Phoenix had ever been. It was called the Irish Republican Brotherhood, or shortly the I.R.B. ; but in America, to which it soon spread, it was called the Fenian Society, and its members the Fenians, the name borne by the famous militia of olden days, which were commanded by Finn MacCumhael. Organized into circles, each under a centre, all authority converged through higher centres commanding many circles, towards the head centre, Stephens, who was in supreme command. Thus, while the lesser officers knew little of the organization, and had therefore little to tell if they were traitors, Stephens knew everything, and held the threads of the whole movement in his hands. John O'Mahony was supreme in America ; John O'Leary, Thomas Clarke Luby

<sup>1</sup> *New Ireland*, pp. 196-204 ; O'Leary, i. 82-91.

and Charles Kickham in Ireland ; and there were agents also in England and Scotland. O'Mahony was a graduate of Trinity College, a man given much to historical studies, and thoroughly honest and sincere. O'Leary, Luby and Kickham were, like O'Mahony, all Munstermen, all well connected and educated, and all—Kickham especially—men of literary capacity. Aiding them at home was O'Donovan Rossa ; aiding O'Mahony in America were Doheny, Corcoran and many others.<sup>1</sup>

Assuming that an Irish republic was formed with the enrolment of the first members, in the Fenian oath allegiance was sworn to the new republic, which necessarily meant a repudiation of English power. Nor was there any difficulty in finding thousands who were ready to take such an oath. Irish landlordism and English law, as administered in Ireland, had planted beyond the Atlantic a new Irish nation more fiercely opposed to England than even the old green island at home.<sup>2</sup> Amid the rush and bustle of American cities, on American farms and railroads, in the lonely log-cabin in American woods, down in the depths of American mines were Irish exiles who thought of England only with a curse. Their fathers had told them of the horrors of the famine days, and they themselves had seen the crowbar brigade at work, the house levelled in which they were born, the fire quenched round which they had gathered to pray at their mother's knee. They had known English law only by its oppressions, and Government only as an instrument of terror. Irish landlordism and English rule they had always seen linked together in injustice, and, as they thought of them, the light of battle was in their eye. Nor would they have hesitated to join with the Hottentot to bring England to the dust. In a country where they were free to speak out, they used language of violence which would not be tolerated at home ; and one newspaper in San Francisco openly advocated assassination, and even offered a reward for the murder of individual Irish landlords whom it named. Not all the American Fenians were so bloodthirsty as this, but all

<sup>1</sup> O'Leary, *Recollections of Fenians and Fenianism*, i. 99-105.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 120-21.



hated England and loved Ireland, and gave expression both to their love and hatred in swearing allegiance to the Irish republic. In the American Civil War thousands rushed to arms for one side or the other, and thousands of them fell gloriously on American battlefields. Others, however, passed unscathed through the fire and smoke of battle, and when the Civil War was over in 1865, 200,000 Irish-American soldiers were set free to fight England.

In Ireland meanwhile the Fenian circles in 1860 and 1861 were being slowly filled. But in the latter year an event occurred which had a stimulating effect. Terence Bellew M'Manus, one of the '48 men, had died in exile in San Francisco, and it was determined to bring his remains to Ireland. Across the American Continent was one long national demonstration, and in Dublin no such funeral procession had been seen since O'Connell's. Tens of thousands from city and country trudged through the streets for hours on that bleak November day, and while the torches blazed amid the fast-falling shades of gathering night, the faces of the spectators—mostly young men—wore a stern resolve to follow in the footsteps of the dead.<sup>1</sup> Freely they joined the Fenian ranks, and when Stephens and Luby went through the country districts subsequently, crowds had already taken or were ready to take the Fenian oath.<sup>2</sup>

Towards the end of 1863 sufficient funds were available to start the *Irish People*, which was the organ of the Fenians. O'Leary was editor, Luby, Kickham and Stephens were among the contributors. Its object was to promote Fenianism; to discredit Parliamentary agitation; to wean the Ribbonmen from agrarian to national objects; to attack all who opposed the Fenian movement, and especially the priests, as unsafe political guides.<sup>3</sup> Much hatred of England was thus stirred up, much opposition to Parliamentary action; and the Ribbonmen, turning from agrarian quarrels and the assassination of landlords, swore allegiance to the Irish republic.<sup>4</sup> And not only did recruits come from the country farmers' sons, from the artisans and

<sup>1</sup> O'Leary, i. 155-70.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 180, 188, 198-203.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* i. 250-66; ii. 6-11, 89-111.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* ii. 86-87, 113-27, 180-85.

shopmen, the students and journalists of the cities and towns, but from many Government offices, from the Dublin police, from the Irish in Great Britain; and thousands of the Irish soldiers in the British Army also joined.<sup>1</sup>

Fully aware that a Fenian Society existed in America and in Ireland, the Government waited, and the *Times* sneered at the young men who marched and drilled at night, predicting that they would be good British soldiers.<sup>2</sup> Suddenly, however, guided by two informers, Nagle and Power, the *Irish People* in September 1865 was raided by detectives, its printing-press, type and papers seized. O'Leary, Luby, Kickham and O'Donovan Rossa were arrested, and so were many others through the country towns; and special commissions were set up both in Dublin and Cork for the trials. O'Donovan Rossa, having been already concerned with the Phœnix Society, was sentenced to penal servitude for life; O'Leary, Luby and Kickham to twenty years; and others to shorter terms of imprisonment. Stephens evaded arrest until November, and a few nights after being lodged in Richmond in prison he made good his escape. The fact was that some of the prison warders were Fenians, and it was these who opened the prison door for their chief.<sup>3</sup>

Dislocation of Fenian plans necessarily followed the arrest of the Fenian leaders. Stephens reached America only to find his followers suspicious and distrustful, and in 1866 a section of them, repudiating both him and O'Mahony, crossed the frontier into Canada, and attacked England on American soil. During the war promises of help had been made to them by the United States, angry with England for her sympathy with the Southern States. But these promises were easily forgotten, the laws of neutrality were enforced, and the thousands of Fenians hurrying to the frontier were turned back by American arms. The small Fenian force which crossed were soon overpowered by superior numbers, and England rejoiced that all danger was passed. Not yet, however, for Stephens announced

<sup>1</sup> O'Leary, ii. 229-40.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 195-6.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 205-25; *Annual Register*, pp. 172-85; *Chronicle*, pp. 232-48.



that the blow would be struck in Ireland itself, and during the year 1866. But Stephens never came, and his disgusted followers deposed him and elected Colonel Kelly their chief, and under his directions the insurrection broke out in Ireland on the 5th of March 1867. Some collisions with police and soldiers took place at Kilmallock, Tallaght and near Cork, but the rising had no chance of success, for the Government had been forewarned and were amply prepared. Corydon, a Fenian informer who knew much, told all he knew, and in consequence Chester Castle was saved from capture by the Irish in England; General Massy, the military commander, was arrested at Limerick Junction, and the officers, who had come from America in the steamer *Jacknall*, had no sooner landed than they were made prisoners. A terrific snowstorm which began on the 5th of March was also helpful, and showed, not for the first time, that the very elements were aiding England.<sup>1</sup>

Within the next few months jails were filled and judges were busy trying prisoners and passing sentences on them. In some cases the conduct of the trials was much complained of, and special resentment was shown towards Judge Keogh, once a patriot and then a renegade, and now lecturing prisoners on the iniquity of rebellion. But to rise in rebellion is an extreme course where failure means ruin, and the prisoners could not so much complain if they were convicted, and if their sentences were severe. In England, however, there was one case which aroused bitter feelings in Ireland. Colonel Kelly and Captain Deasy, having escaped to England, were arrested at Manchester in September, but a crowd of Fenians attacked the prison van carrying them, and set them free. In the attack a policeman, Sergeant Brett, lost his life, and five men—Allen, Larken, O'Brien, O'Meagher Condon and Maguire—were tried on the capital charge, convicted and sentenced to death. Maguire, however, was pardoned, not having been present at all at the attack; Condon was pardoned because he was an American citizen; the other three were executed. Certainly they had attacked the prison van, and equally certain it was that they had

<sup>1</sup> *New Ireland*, pp. 274-84.

not committed murder. But it availed nothing. England was enraged against the Fenians and would not be appeased without blood, and throughout the trial the animus of witnesses, jury and judges was apparent. As the prisoners stood in the dock they were manacled, and as they stood on the scaffold a huge crowd gathered to gloat over their execution. These things moved the whole Irish race to indignation. The Manchester martyrs were at once enrolled among the heroes who had bled for Ireland; their cry of "God save Ireland" from the dock was taken up and repeated, and the few stirring lines of T. D. Sullivan, ending with the refrain, have since become the National Anthem.<sup>1</sup>

Undeterred by all that had happened, a Fenian in London named Barrett blew up a portion of Clerkenwell prison, killing twelve persons. This was in December, and in that month and in the following, Captain Mackay, with a few followers, made several daring and successful raids for arms in Cork. But he was captured, convicted and sentenced to a term of imprisonment, and from that date no further efforts were made by the Fenians, and Fenianism ceased to agitate the public mind, which it had agitated so long.<sup>2</sup>

The average Englishman was shocked at these events. He had been accustomed to accept the periodical platitudes of Lord Carlisle as an accurate description of the state of Ireland, and now he found that all the time widespread disaffection had existed, that beneath an apparently placid surface there burned fierce volcanic fires. One great Englishman, however, knew that Ireland was not content, and could not be. This was John Bright, M.P. for Birmingham. A Quaker with broad human sympathies, an orator of unsurpassed powers either in Parliament or on the platform, he was the champion of the weak and the oppressed in every land. He had studied Irish history, and was familiar with every detail of the infamous Penal Code as he was with the tyranny and greed of Irish landlords, and the

<sup>1</sup> *New Ireland*, pp. 284-92; *Speeches from the Dock*, part ii.

<sup>2</sup> *Speeches from the Dock*, part i. 223-38; *Parnell Movement*, p. 136; O'Brien, *Fifty Years of Concessions*, ii. 228-31.



corruption of Irish administration; and as to the Irish State Church, he declared that he almost despaired of Ireland, seeing that she had borne this iniquity so long.<sup>1</sup> For more than twenty years his eloquent voice had pleaded for justice, but corrupt Irish representatives had given him little support, and nothing had been done. Nor could anything be done now until Fenianism had been put down. The cry in England was for stern repression, and for a time the old familiar sight of Irish Government was to be seen—the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act, the scaffold, the dock, the prison cell. But when the Fenians had been crushed, and the fierce storm of English passion had died down, Englishmen were ready to listen to men like Mr. Bright, and learning what was the extent and the causes of Irish disaffection, they asked themselves if anything could be done for its appeasement.<sup>2</sup>

The Irish tenantry were specially anxious for land reform, the Catholic bishops for a Catholic University, but neither the official Whigs nor the Tories would pledge themselves to these concessions, and only the advanced Liberals were willing to follow Mr. Bright, and especially in his attack on the Irish Church. This question then became common ground for the Irish National Association and the English Liberation Society, and in 1865 Mr. Dillwynn, an English member, brought forward a motion in Parliament declaring that the Irish Church Establishment was unsatisfactory, and demanded the early attention of Government.<sup>3</sup> Failing to carry his motion, it was again brought forward in 1866 and in 1867 by Sir John Grey, M.P. for Kilkenny, and each time was unsuccessful. Meantime, in 1866, the Liberal Government had been driven from office, and the Tories under Derby and Disraeli succeeded. More than twenty years before, Disraeli described the Irish question as “a starving population, an absentee aristocracy and an alien Church,”<sup>4</sup> and declared it to be the business of English statesmanship to effect a salutary change. But he was then attacking Peel,

<sup>1</sup> *New Ireland*, pp. 305-6.

<sup>2</sup> *Bright's Speeches*, pp. 51, 73-74.

<sup>3</sup> *Annual Register*, pp. 22-27.

<sup>4</sup> O'Connor's *Lord Beaconsfield*, p. 254.

and the admittedly unsatisfactory state of Ireland furnished him with a suitable weapon for attack. In 1867 the state of Ireland was even worse than in 1843; but Mr. Disraeli was then in office at the head of a reactionary Tory party, and was therefore not anxious for reform. The time had come, however, when the Irish State Church must cease; the handwriting was on the wall; and Sir John Grey's motion in 1867 was supported by the bulk of the Liberals, and was defeated only by 195 to 183 votes. The next year Mr. Maguire, M.P. for Dungarvan, brought forward a motion on the state of Ireland, and after many days' debate the Liberal leader, Mr. Gladstone, declared for reform. Mr. Maguire then withdrew his motion, after which, on the 23rd of March, Mr. Gladstone brought forward three resolutions: the first declaring that the Established Church of Ireland should cease as an establishment; the second that, pending legislation, no new personal interests should be created; the third praying the Queen to place her interests in Church temporalities at the disposal of Parliament. The Tories had appointed a Royal Commission, and now agreed to reform but not to disestablishment; also they agreed to increase the Regium Donum, and to give a charter to a Catholic University. But Mr. Bright scoffed at these proposals as reminding him of the man who prescribed pills for an earthquake. The further Tory proposal to postpone the question of Disestablishment until after a General Election was also scouted by the Opposition; and Mr. Gladstone's resolutions were proceeded with and carried by large majorities.<sup>1</sup>

In spite of these adverse votes Mr. Disraeli clung to office. But he was compelled to dissolve, and on the question of Disestablishment the General Election was fought. On one side was the party of ascendancy appealing to British bigotry with a "No Popery" cry; on the other the party of reformers appealing to British justice. The latter triumphed, and when Mr. Gladstone met the House of Commons as Prime Minister in February 1869, he had a majority of 120 pledged to the

<sup>1</sup> O'Brien, ii. 234-41.



overthrow of the Irish State Church.<sup>1</sup> He was then in his sixtieth year, the most conspicuous figure in the British Empire. Like Burke he seemed to have taken all knowledge for his province, had read everything and remembered everything. Master of many languages, he was intimately acquainted with the whole field of history, discussed questions of theology and philosophy as an expert, could address an Italian audience with fluency in their own tongue, and in speaking and writing ancient Greek could have creditably filled the rôle of an Athenian student of the age of Pericles. As a finance minister he had no equal during the century except Pitt and Peel. As an orator he has had few superiors in any age and none at all in his own. He spoke on every subject with a wealth of information, a dignity of language, a sincerity and earnestness of purpose, always rising with his subject and never falling below it. His fine presence, his manly bearing, his flashing eye, his voice of singular sweetness and power added to his many other advantages; and on the platform and in Parliament, even his ablest and bitterest opponents could not repress their admiration nor resist his attacks. In his youth, as the defender of Church and State, he was described by Macaulay as the rising hope of those stern and unbending Tories. But though fond of power, he preferred to follow his convictions rather than his party, and in 1846 he supported Peel. Gradually he drifted to the Liberal side, and in 1865 Palmerston described him as "a dangerous man," ready to go much farther than the Whig Premier wished him to go. He had then ceased to be loyal to the Irish Church,<sup>2</sup> and opposed Mr. Dillwynn's motion with reluctance. The death of Palmerston and the subsequent retirement of Earl Russell made him leader and left his hands free. To attack the Irish Church he only waited for "the first streaks of dawn," in a suitable opportunity and a ripened public opinion, and when Parliament declared in favour of his Resolutions in 1868, and the nation's approval

<sup>1</sup> *Annual Register*, pp. 6-7; Morley, *Life of Gladstone*, i. 885.

<sup>2</sup> Morley, *Life of Gladstone*, i. 775-6.

followed at the General Election, Gladstone, knowing that the dawn had come, grappled at once with "that great scandal and iniquity the Irish Church."<sup>1</sup>

In a speech of three hours' duration he introduced his Bill in March 1869.<sup>2</sup> The mastery of detail, the marshalling of facts, the careful handling of complicated and conflicting interests, the great debating power, the high level of earnestness and eloquence maintained throughout roused the enthusiasm of his supporters and the admiration of his opponents. On the 1st of January 1871 the Irish State Church was to cease its connexion with the English Church and with the Government of the United Kingdom. Calculating its property as worth £15,000,000 and its annual revenue at £700,000, it was to get back £10,000,000, the surplus going to purposes of public utility in Ireland. The Regium Donum and the grant to Maynooth were also to cease, a lump sum amounting to nearly £1,000,000 being given in exchange. Commissioners would take charge of the whole State Church property and carry out the provisions of the Act of Parliament. This was generous treatment of an institution which had been so disastrous a failure. Persecution and penal laws it had freely used, the whole resources of a powerful empire had been placed at its disposal, and yet it had made no progress. In 1801 the Catholics outnumbered all Protestant denominations by four to one, in 1834 by five to one; in 1861, after the famine, the latter proportion was still maintained; and taking only the Episcopalian Protestants, the Catholics outnumbered them by seven to one. In Munster the State Church counted only one in twenty, in Connaught one in twenty-five, in Ulster not more than one in five. A large number of parishes had not a single Protestant, and even from these an absentee minister drew a substantial salary. Mr. Moore, M.P. for Mayo, paid tithes in eight parishes, in not one of which was there a church, a glebe, or a resident Protestant clergyman, and in the diocese of Dublin itself there were nineteen parishes without a single member of the

<sup>1</sup> Mill, p. 109.

<sup>2</sup> *Annual Register*, pp. 24-29.



State Church ; and throughout Ireland there were 199 parishes without any Protestant landlord, tenant or minister, these parishes paying an ecclesiastical revenue of £13,400. Nor had there been any divine service in any of these parishes since the Reformation.<sup>1</sup> And while the Catholic bishops and clergy were burdened with work and poverty, the Protestant clergy, maintained in idleness, often amassed considerable wealth. One bishop left at his death £600,000, another £400,000 ; and the Archbishop of Tuam, in an almost exclusively Catholic district, left £260,000.<sup>2</sup>

That such a Church should provoke the wrath of Irishmen was to be expected. But it provoked the wrath of Englishmen too, and it was they who described it as "unjustifiable and indefensible," "an anomaly and a grievance," "intolerable robbery" ; and Sydney Smith wrote that "there was nothing like it in Europe or Asia or the discovered parts of Africa, or in all we have heard of Timbuctoo."<sup>3</sup> Nor did the greater part of the Tory orators make any serious effort to defend it in 1869, though there was talk of confiscation and plunder and sacrilege. Mr. Butt, M.P. for Trinity College, Dublin, and Mr. Hardy, M.P. for Oxford University, took higher and surer ground when they pointed to the Act of Union, declaring that the maintenance of the State Church was fundamental ; and in pressing their argument and others, both these gentlemen showed ability and zeal. But Mr. Gladstone easily overwhelmed them in argument and in the division lobbies, and the Bill passed the House of Commons in the end of May.<sup>4</sup> In the Lords it passed its second reading, but was grievously emasculated in Committee and then returned to the House of Commons.<sup>5</sup> Mr. Gladstone, however, was in no humour for surrender or compromise, the Lords' amendments were rejected, and for a time a struggle seemed imminent between both Houses of Parliament.<sup>6</sup>

The intervention of the Queen herself with some of the

<sup>1</sup> Brady, *The Irish State Church*, pp. 159-61.

<sup>2</sup> O'Brien, ii. 189-205.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* ii. 175-6.

<sup>4</sup> *Annual Register*, pp. 30-69.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* 71-106.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* 108-14.

bishops, the tact and patience of Lord Granville, the firmness of Mr. Gladstone, and the loyalty with which his party supported him were the chief factors in securing peace. An additional sum of £840,000 was given the disestablished Church, and it was agreed that the surplus should be under the control of Parliament. Militant and unyielding, old Lord Derby and a few others pronounced these concessions inadequate. But the wiser counsels of Lord Cairns and the Archbishop of Canterbury prevailed; the Lords accepted the amendments and passed the Bill, which received the Royal Assent on the 26th of July, and on the 1st of January 1871 the Irish State Church ceased to exist. And thus, after a long and inglorious career, a mischievous and hated institution came crashing to the earth. Sheltering every abuse, sanctioning every oppression, the tool of tyranny and the apologist of corruption, it fell amid the execrations of millions of Irishmen whom it had so long impoverished and enslaved.<sup>1</sup>

The next year Mr. Gladstone passed an Irish Land Act, which legalized the Ulster and other analogous customs, provided compensation for capricious evictions, and gave facilities in certain cases to tenants to buy out their holdings. Peasant proprietary had been frequently advocated by Mr. Stuart Mill and Mr. Bright;<sup>2</sup> and the clauses in the Land Act were due to the latter, and were often called after his name. The Act, if honestly administered, would have done much for Irish tenants. But the landlords, not scrupulous where their interests or prejudices were concerned, managed by various devices to defeat the provisions of Mr. Gladstone's Act. In spite of it tenants were rack-rented and evicted, few peasant proprietors were created, and the Act, a failure itself, was but the first in a long series of measures of land reform.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Annual Register*, pp. 115-19; Morley, i. 903-14.

<sup>2</sup> *Bright's Speeches*, p. 126.

<sup>3</sup> O'Brien, ii. 307-12; *Annual Register*, pp. 20-49.



## CHAPTER XI

### *The Home Rule Movement*

IN May 1870, in the Bilton Hotel, Dublin, a number of representative Irishmen gathered together to take counsel about the state of Ireland. The diversity of creed and class and political views recalled the Tenant Right Conference of 1850. There were Protestants and Catholics, Tories and Liberals, Orangemen, Fenians and Repealers. Dr. Maxwell of the *Mail* was a militant Tory ; Major Knox, the proprietor of the *Irish Times*, a Protestant Conservative ; Mr. A. M. Sullivan of the *Nation*, a Catholic Repealer ; James O'Connor, a Fenian ; John Martin, a Presbyterian and a Young Irelander ; Mr. Galbraith, a Trinity College professor ; Captain King-Harman, a Protestant landlord ; Archdeacon Gould, a Protestant clergyman ; Isaac Butt, a Protestant lawyer ; Mr. Purdon, the Protestant Lord Mayor of Dublin.

Among so many Irishmen of position and education, wealth and talent were well represented ; but in general ability, in knowledge and experience of public affairs, in oratorical power, in the qualities essential to statesmanship, Isaac Butt towered high above them all. Born in Donegal in 1815, he was called to the Bar in 1838, became Queen's Counsel in 1844, and so rapidly did he rise in the esteem of the Tory party, to which he belonged, that in the great debate on Repeal in the Dublin Corporation in 1843, he was selected as the Tory champion to defend the Union against O'Connell. Nor was his speech unworthy of his great antagonist. Entering Parliament in 1852, he soon made his mark as a speaker, and long before 1870 he was as an orator and an advocate without a rival at the Irish Bar. With conspicuous ability he defended

Gavan Duffy in 1848, and he defended the Fenians in 1865 and in the subsequent years. It is probable that his experience thus acquired turned his thoughts from Tory to Nationalist ways. His nature was generous, his heart was warm and kind, and seeing so many gifted and chivalrous men sacrifice everything in a hopeless struggle for Ireland, he gradually grew to condemn the system of government under which they suffered. His pamphlet on Irish Land Tenure was a scathing indictment of Irish landlordism and a splendidly reasoned case for reform. The scenes he witnessed at Irish railway stations, when emigrants were parting from their broken-hearted friends, touched his heart, and in language of singular eloquence and power he lamented the terrible exodus which inevitably would involve the rapid extinction of an ancient race.

When therefore he spoke to the audience at the Bilton Hotel, it was no longer as a Tory, but as a Nationalist and reformer, anxious that Irish Government should be brought into harmony with the people's views, anxious that the Irish peasant, rooted in the soil by equitable laws, should cease to turn his face towards the setting sun. A few years before this his audience would not have listened. But many things had recently happened. Attached to Protestant ascendancy, the Orangemen and Protestant Conservative had seen it disappear with the overthrow of the State Church. The landlords bitterly resented the invasion of their rights and privileges by Gladstone's Land Act, and feared that worse might come. The Fenians, who expected great things from an insurrection, saw only the fiasco of 1867, and the enforcement of neutrality laws by the United States deprived them of the hope of striking at England on American soil. Protestant and Catholic, Liberal and Conservative, Repealer and Fenian were satisfied that the Union had been a failure, and were therefore disposed to listen when Mr. Butt assailed the British Parliament. Nor was there a dissentient voice raised when he proposed "that it is the opinion of this meeting that the true remedy for the evils of Ireland is the establishment of an Irish Parliament, with full control over our domestic affairs." Thus was the Home Rule movement



ushered into existence by the founding of the "Home Government Association." Its policy was not repeal but Federal Home Rule, thus going back to the ideas of Sharman Crawford as opposed to those of O'Connell. There was to be no interference with Imperial questions, with the rights of the Crown, the position of the Colonies, the army or navy. The proposed Irish Parliament was to deal only with the internal affairs of Ireland, leaving all other questions to the Imperial Parliament. The co-operation of all classes of Irishmen was invited, and public opinion was to be influenced by speeches and writings on behalf of the new Association.<sup>1</sup>

In a short time the movement made progress, and at parliamentary elections in 1871, four Home Rulers headed the polls. Mr. Butt himself was elected for Limerick, Mr. Mitchell Henry for Galway, Mr. P. J. Smith for Westmeath, Mr. John Martin for Meath. The following year the Home Ruler, Mr. Blennerhasset, captured Kerry after a fierce battle; and Captain Nolan headed the poll at Galway. The latter, however, was unseated on petition, and the seat given to his Tory opponent, Captain Trench; Judge Keogh, who tried the petition, declaring that Nolan's clerical supporters had been guilty of spiritual intimidation of the worst kind. And he denounced not only a few of the priests but all, and in language so coarse and virulent that friends and foes alike were shocked at such a tirade coming from the seat of justice, a tirade which recalled the worst days of Lord Norbury.

The following year a very representative conference of Home Rulers was held in the Rotunda, which lasted for three days, and resulted in establishing the Home Rule League. Its policy was that of the Home Government Association, which then ceased to exist; its immediate business to prepare the parliamentary register so as to be ready for the General Election which was known to be near; and in Parliament the Home Rule members were to be a distinct and separate party, acting on the lines of independent opposition.<sup>2</sup>

Mr. Gladstone, though friendly to Ireland, viewed the Home

<sup>1</sup> *New Ireland*, pp. 339-46.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 381-3.

Rule movement with disfavour. In taking office in 1868 he declared his mission to be the pacification of Ireland,<sup>1</sup> and for this purpose he determined to cut down the three-branched Upas tree of ascendancy. Two of the branches had been laid low by his vigorous strokes in 1869 and in 1870, when he destroyed the State Church and put the Land Act on the Statute Book. There yet remained an educational ascendancy, for the Catholics could not avail themselves of Trinity College, or of the Queen's Colleges, without doing violence to their religious convictions. Before approaching this subject, however, Mr. Gladstone passed the Ballot Act, which, by substituting secret for open voting, freed the Irish tenant from being terrorized by his landlord. This Act passed in 1872, and in the following year Mr. Gladstone's University Bill was introduced. It was a thorny subject to handle. Trinity College, in selfish isolation, would not throw open its Fellowships and Scholarships to Catholics, or even be associated with a Catholic College in the Dublin University. The Queen's University and its colleges were avowedly secularist, and as such effectually barred the Catholics out. And the Catholic University supported by voluntary contributions had not the income or equipment necessary for University work, and could get neither grant nor charter from Parliament. In Mr. Gladstone's Bill the Queen's University disappeared and the Queen's College, Galway, a clear distinction being made between Dublin University and Trinity College. The first named was to be the only University in Ireland, while Trinity College, the Queen's Colleges of Belfast and Cork, the Catholic University and Magee College, were all to be constituent colleges. Other colleges might in time be affiliated. The grant of £12,000 a year hitherto given to the Galway College would be given to the new Dublin University, which was also to get £10,000 from Trinity College, and £28,000 from the Church Surplus Fund—in all, an income of £50,000 a year. All tests were to be abolished in the University, and no chairs of theology, mental and moral philosophy or modern history were to be

<sup>1</sup> Morley, i. 886.



endowed, though such chairs might be set up by private endowment.

The Council of the University was to be representative of the various colleges, and to some extent in proportion to the number of matriculated students, and after a time the new Council would be replaced by another, appointed partly by the Crown, partly by the Council itself, partly by the professors of the University, and partly by the Senate. The vacancies would arise by a certain number of the Council retiring every year by rotation, even if there were no casual vacancies by death or other causes.

The Bill was to grapple with a long-standing grievance and satisfy the Catholics without doing injustice to other creeds. But it satisfied no party or creed. The Catholics complained that two Queen's colleges were still endowed, while their own Catholic University received nothing. The Protestants complained that violent hands were being laid on Trinity College. The secularists condemned the suppression of the Galway College, and predicted with alarm that the system of filling vacancies on the University Council would in time throw the whole University education of the country into the hands of the Catholic bishops. Finally, men asked what sort of University that would be which gave no official recognition to such subjects as mental and moral philosophy and modern history. The result was that the Conservatives and the Irish Catholic Liberals coalesced, and the Bill was defeated by a narrow majority.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Gladstone at once resigned; but Mr. Disraeli, not having a majority of the House, refused to form a Government, and Gladstone and his colleagues returned to office. The Liberals, however, were discredited by their defeat and lost heavily at by-elections during the year, and in the following January Parliament was dissolved. The Liberals suffered a severe defeat, Mr. Gladstone resigned, and Mr. Disraeli became Premier with a strong majority at his command.

<sup>1</sup> *Annual Register*, pp. 11-32, the numbers being 284 against 287; Dr. Walsh's *The Irish University Question*, pp. 41-42; *Writings of Cardinal Cullen*, iii. 501.

In Ireland, as indeed in England, the dissolution had come as a surprise. The Home Rule League had not had time to perfect its organization, and was therefore not prepared with suitable candidates; and Mr. Butt, and not for the first time, was in such pecuniary difficulties that he had to fly to England to escape imprisonment for debt. In these circumstances the battle was fought at the polls, and yet, so powerfully did the demand for an Irish Parliament appeal to the masses, that sixty members were returned pledged to Home Rule. Some indeed were but nominal Home Rulers: these were lawyers who desired a seat in Parliament as a stepping-stone to the Bench, landlords with social ambitions, Whigs who in their hearts regarded Mr. Gladstone as too advanced a reformer, Tories who would vote for a Home Rule motion in Parliament for one day in the year, and for the rest of the year might be relied on by the Tory whips. There were, indeed, a few sound and honest Home Rulers, such as Mr. Sullivan, Mr. Ronayne, Mr. John Martin, Mr. Biggar, Mr. O'Connor Power and a few others. But the majority were dishonest and insincere, and quite as willing to sell Ireland as were Sadleir and Keogh in earlier days.

It would be difficult for any leader to make such a party an effective force in Parliament, and Mr. Butt was certainly unequal to the task. He was a great orator and debater, little inferior to Mr. Gladstone himself. But he was then old, too old for vigorous action, and his habits, always desultory and irregular, ill fitted him to reconcile jarring elements or vigorously enforce discipline. His pecuniary embarrassments made it necessary for him to devote a good part of his time to the practice of his profession, and he had not the leisure, and perhaps not the inclination, to create and maintain a strong popular agitation outside Parliament which would supply a useful stimulus to parliamentary action. With profound admiration for the British Constitution, and profound veneration for the great traditions of the British Parliament, he had a strong faith in British justice, and believed that by reason and argument the justice of Ireland's claims would ultimately



obtain recognition. Yet he made no headway. Both British parties agreed in declaring that Home Rule was beyond the range of practical politics, and both joined in voting every Home Rule motion down. In 1874 a Home Rule amendment to the Address was defeated by 288 votes, another in 1876 by 258 votes, and a further one in 1877 met a similar fate. And even minor questions, such as the extension of the franchise or the amendment of the Land Act of 1870, fared no better. The Municipal Franchise Bill of 1874 was thrown out by 111 of a majority; that of the following year by 100 votes. The Irish Municipal Corporations Bill of 1875, the Irish Fisheries Bill, the Irish Borough Franchise Bill of 1876, the Land Bill of 1875, a motion for inquiry into the working of the Land Act, the Irish Land Bill of 1877, were one and all rejected by crushing majorities.<sup>1</sup>

Year after year not a mention of Ireland was found in the Queen's Speeches, or if any such was found it was to announce the introduction of a Coercion Bill, or to continue a Coercion Act already on the Statute Book. And in passing these measures the Liberals were as prompt to give their votes as the Conservatives. The latter were especially strong after the election of 1874, and their position was still further strengthened by the fact that Mr. Gladstone, early in 1875, definitely retired from the leadership of the Liberal party. His successor was the Marquis of Hartington, a member of the great house of Cavendish and heir to the Duke of Devonshire, a Liberal by tradition, a Conservative by conviction, an enemy to all reform, and especially to Irish reform. As Chief Secretary for Ireland in 1871, he had an attack made by the police on a peaceful amnesty meeting in the Phoenix Park. He was ever ready to resist even the smallest concession to Ireland, and ever ready to advocate every measure of coercion; and the *Annual Register*<sup>2</sup> notes that when the Coercion Bill of 1875 was before the House of Commons, Lord Hartington was "more ministerial than the Ministerialists," that is, more coercionist than the coercionists. English members, indeed, barely

<sup>1</sup> *New Ireland*, pp. 396-8.

<sup>2</sup> *Annual Register*, p. 17.

tolerated Mr. Butt and his friends when they demanded reform, and English newspapers could only say that after all "a large allowance must be made for the vivid fancy of Irishmen."<sup>1</sup> The Irish Land question they thought was settled and done with, and any attempt to revive it was a wicked and wanton attempt to reopen a sore which had already healed. Thus, unable to accomplish anything for Ireland, and in consequence dejected and dispirited, Mr. Butt plodded wearily on. Every session had its own crop of motions rejected, of Bills thrown out, of eloquent speeches addressed to ears that would not hear. Like the fabled island in the Western Ocean, Home Rule receded still farther as time advanced. The Fenians, with little faith in parliamentary action, were losing the little faith they had, and every day an increasing number of Irishmen were becoming more convinced than ever that the Home Rule party were powerless for good, and were but laboriously and painfully ploughing the sands.

As early as 1874, at a private meeting of the Irish Party, Mr. Ronayne, M.P. for Cork, proposed that the Irish members should interfere more in English and Imperial questions, especially those questions which specially affected the working classes. English sympathy for Ireland would thus be evoked, reactionary legislation would be thwarted, and English members who had so often obstructed and defeated Irish measures of reform would have the weapon of obstruction turned against themselves. Mr. Ronayne, however, found little support in the party, and none at all from Mr. Butt, and he died in 1876 without any serious attempt having been made to give practical effect to his views. And meantime the old futile way was continued, and while the Irish members held aloof from English and Imperial measures, the English members rejected every Irish measure except Coercion Acts with scorn.

But there were two Irish members who believed Mr. Ronayne's suggestions to be good. These were Joseph Gillis Biggar, who represented Cavan, and Mr. Charles Stewart Parnell, M.P. for Meath. Mr. Biggar was a native of Belfast

<sup>1</sup> *New Ireland*, p. 398.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 438.



and had come of a Presbyterian stock. He was a wealthy man, having made his money in trade, and when he entered Parliament in 1874 was forty-six years of age. At school or college he had learned little, and indeed cared little for books or for those who read or wrote them. But he had a talent for figures, and was a shrewd man of business, practical, matter-of-fact and unimaginative. He had become a Catholic and a Fenian, and was in fact one of the Supreme Council of the I.R.B. when he entered Parliament. Of public affairs he had no experience, except as a member of the Belfast Water Board. He had no taste and no respect for oratory, was quite unable to make a speech, and with his rasping voice and uncouth appearance was ill fitted to make his mark in Parliament. For that assembly he had no respect, and none for the good opinion of the English people, whom he hated and despised. He was intensely and fiercely Irish, and wanted work done for Ireland, and as the English Parliament would have no such work done his ambition was to bring English legislation also to a standstill. He had no hope that Butt would get anything by conciliating the English people, thinking it better to make them uncomfortable and enrage them.<sup>1</sup> In 1875 he proceeded to give these ideas tangible shape. A Coercion Bill was before the House of Commons, and Biggar determined that if he could not defeat it, at least he would delay its passage. For four continuous hours he talked against the Bill. What he said was not a reasoned speech, nor an argumentative presentation of facts, nor a calm appeal to justice or fair-play, nor an impassioned plea for a nation that had suffered so many wrongs. It was a mixture of newspaper reports, of resolutions of public bodies, of evidence given before a Parliamentary Committee regarding outrages in Westmeath, and of occasional comments of his own, which were neither striking nor new. Called to order by the Speaker, who could not hear him, Mr. Biggar calmly shifted his place from below the gangway to the Treasury Bench, and repeated all that he had previously said. Time was thus wasted, a Coercion Bill

<sup>1</sup> O'Brien's *Life of Parnell*, i. 81.

was impeded, Parliament was disgusted, the English people irritated, and Mr. Biggar himself satisfied. And these tactics he frequently repeated in the session of 1875, and again in the following year.<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Parnell was a much abler and a much more remarkable man than Mr. Biggar. His family came originally from Congleton in Cheshire, where one Thomas Parnell, a draper, was mayor in the reign of James I. The mayor's son was a prominent Cromwellian, and his grandson in the reign of Charles II. leaving England altogether, settled in Ireland, where he purchased an estate. One of *his* sons, Thomas, was the well-known poet, another son was a judge, and the son of the latter was also a judge, and the first baronet of the name. The second baronet was the famous Sir John Parnell, Chancellor of the Exchequer, the friend of Grattan, the uncompromising opponent of the Union. After the Union his eldest son sat in the United Parliament, was a member of Lord Grey's Ministry, and became ennobled with the title of Lord Congleton. The peer's younger brother was William, who lived at Avondale in Wicklow, and who wrote *An Historical Apology for the Irish Catholics*. The grandson of this William was Mr. Biggar's friend, Charles Stewart Parnell. He was born at Avondale in 1846. His mother was a daughter of Commodore Stewart of the American Navy, who had fought the English and beat them in the war of 1812 and 1814; and the daughter hated England and the English people for their "arrogance, greed, cant and hypocrisy." "They are simply thieves," she said—language which is certainly strong, whatever may be thought of its justice.<sup>2</sup>

Mr. Parnell fully shared his mother's antipathy to England. And yet in manner and temperament he was much more English than Irish. Cold, unemotional, imperturbable, he had none of the wit or fire or enthusiasm of the Irish Celt; he was not eloquent and hated oratory, nor had he any ambition in public speaking but to say what he had to say in the fewest possible words. A Protestant in religion and educated at

<sup>1</sup> O'Brien's *Parnell*, i. 81-85.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 1-29.



Protestant schools in England, he subsequently entered Cambridge University, though he did not graduate, and neither in the preliminary schools nor at the University had he given any evidence of superior talent. He had little taste for reading and derived little knowledge from books. His strength was not in his intellect, but in his will, and even in his earliest years he showed himself masterful, domineering, autocratic, impatient of control or contradiction, and always ready to avenge an insult with a blow. Defective in imagination, he confined himself to hard facts, estimated accurately the difficulties to be overcome and the means at his disposal, and when he satisfied himself that a thing ought and could be done, nothing could turn him from his purpose.<sup>1</sup>

After leaving Cambridge in 1869, he lived for some years the rather vacuous life of a country squire—shot, played cricket, rode to hounds, held a commission in the militia, attended grand jury meetings, and filled the office of High Sheriff of Wicklow. Until 1874, when he joined the Home Rule League, he took no part in politics. But he shared his mother's good opinion of the Fenians, and was very indignant because her home in Dublin had been searched by the police. His sister Fanny had written poetry in 1865 for the Fenian newspaper, *The Irish People*; and Parnell himself had scandalized the House of Commons by declaring that the Manchester martyrs were not murderers. In 1874 he contested Dublin County as a Home Ruler, but was beaten. He made a bad impression as a speaker, but he showed grit and determination, and was the bearer of an historic name; and Mr. Butt rejoiced that when Mr. John Martin, M.P., died in 1875, Mr. Parnell was selected as his successor in the representation of Meath.

In the sessions of 1875 and 1876 he was not very active in Parliament. He sat a silent and watchful spectator, and learned the rules of the House. But in 1877 he came into prominence. By that time he had satisfied himself that Butt's methods of argument and conciliation were useless, and that in the obstructive tactics of Mr. Biggar was the only hope for

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* General Butler's *The Light of the West*, pp. 52-91.

Ireland in Parliament. To talk out a Government measure on Wednesday evening as the clock pointed to six, and on other nights as it pointed to the half-hour after midnight, was effective obstruction, because after these hours the rules of Parliament prohibited the consideration of contentious Bills. And to talk at random for the purpose of lengthening out debate was wasting time. But Parliament had a great reserve of strength, an almost limitless power of protecting itself, and could easily put down manifest obstruction. Mr. Parnell saw this. He wanted to waste time as much as Mr. Biggar, but he wanted to conceal his purpose. Theoretically, at least, English and Irish members had equal rights, and if the former interfered to thwart Irish measures, the latter might surely discuss English measures, especially if the discussions were in the interests of justice and public liberty, and for the protection of English minorities, and against the class and selfish legislation of a tyrannical majority. This is what Mr. Parnell did. By moving amendments and challenging discussions he modified the harshest clauses of the Prisons Bill and the Mutiny Bill; he improved the Factories and the Workshops Bill and the Army Discipline Bill; and he made a determined stand against the South African Bill annexing the Transvaal to the British Empire. The friends of humanity appreciated his efforts, and on the Mutiny Bill sixty English members were on his side. More frequently, however, he was almost alone, always with his faithful friend, Mr. Biggar, to whom were soon added Mr. O'Connor Power, Mr. O'Donnell, Mr. Gray, Major Nolan, Major O'Gorman and a few others. Sometimes his whole party numbered ten, sometimes only five, but whether the greater or lesser number, they obstructed Bills, thwarted the Government, and wasted the time of the House of Commons.

The Tory Government were enraged. They could tolerate obstruction by an English party, or even by a small fraction of an English party. They could tolerate an Irish party opposing a Coercion Bill; but to have a small minority of the Irish Party obstructing English business was unendurable and must be put down. When, therefore, any of these Irish obstructives



rose to address the House, English members shouted, coughed, talked loud, hoping to wear out the patience of the speaker. Mr. Biggar retorted by putting after every English Bill which was introduced the notice that it be read a second time that day six months, thus making it contentious and destroying its chances of becoming law. Or, again, Mr. Parnell moved amendment after amendment, and when interrupted moved that the Chairman leave the chair. The taunts and sneers of members or of the newspapers affected him not the least. Disdaining to notice them, he grimly held his ground and only obstructed all the more. Sir Stafford Northcote was then leader of the House, the Premier, Mr. Disraeli, having gone to the Lords in 1876 as Earl of Beaconsfield. Sir Stafford was not a strong man, but he was irritated at the Irish obstructives, and determined to wear them out as perhaps the best way to put them down. On the Prisons Bill the sittings were prolonged till three in the morning, by which time the Irish were exhausted and the Government had their way.<sup>1</sup> On the Mutiny Bill there were more late sittings and stormy scenes.<sup>2</sup> On the South African Bill the climax was reached. By a system of relays the Government kept the House sitting for twenty-six consecutive hours. Mr. Parnell and his little band—seven in all—doggedly fought on, moving to report progress, moving that the Chairman leave the chair, and thus challenging division after division through the long watches of the night. In a contest of endurance, however, victory was with the big battalions, and at last the South African Bill passed through Committee.<sup>3</sup>

In these contests not only did the vast majority of the Liberals side with the Government, but even the majority of the Home Rulers also. And even Mr. Butt was induced to interfere and to condemn. Mr. Parnell would not give way even on some harmless clauses of the Mutiny Bill, and was deaf to all appeal. Mr. Butt was then approached by some

<sup>1</sup> *New Ireland*, p. 418.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 422.

<sup>3</sup> *The Parnell Movement*, pp. 159-60; *New Ireland*, pp. 426-7; *Annual Register*, 1877, pp. 46-50.

of his own followers and by English Conservatives also. The latter flattered him by begging that he would save the dignity of Parliament, and in response to this appeal he turned on Mr. Parnell with language of scathing severity.<sup>1</sup> The latter then yielded, but in a public letter complained of being attacked, and between the two a heated correspondence followed, Mr. Parnell firmly holding his ground. English public opinion was strongly with Mr. Butt, but with the Irish people the positions were reversed. After Parliament had been prorogued a great meeting was held in the Rotunda in the last days of August, and when Mr. Parnell and Mr. Biggar appeared on the platform the cheers that greeted them were loud and long. A few days later the Home Rule Confederation of Great Britain held its annual meeting at Liverpool. An offshoot of the Home Rule League of Ireland, it was a much more militant organization, being largely recruited from the Fenian ranks. Hitherto it had elected Mr. Butt as its annual President, but recent events had alienated its allegiance, and in 1877 Mr. Butt was dethroned and Mr. Parnell took his place.<sup>2</sup>

Within the next few months the new President addressed meetings both in Great Britain and in Ireland, vigorously defending an active policy in Parliament, and asking the friends of Ireland everywhere to aid him in this policy. Mr. Butt, however, still clung to the old methods, and at a conference of Irish members in the City Hall, Dublin, in October, he violently assailed obstruction as ruinous to Irish interests. He renewed the attack at a Home Rule conference in Dublin in the following January. He was convinced that the best policy was to continue appealing to liberal-minded Englishmen, to do this persistently but temperately, without trenching upon the rights of England or lowering the dignity of Parliament. Mr. Parnell was willing to agree with this view if all English members, or even a great majority of them, were liberal-minded. But he denied that they were; they were thinking only of their party and of its interests, and had no wish to redress or even listen to Irish grievances. Nor was Mr. Parnell the man to surrender

<sup>1</sup> *Parnell Movement*, p. 158.

<sup>2</sup> O'Brien's *Parnell*, i. 142-5.



opinions patiently and carefully formed, and this conference, which was called to end discord and promote peace, left matters unchanged.<sup>1</sup> Yet the obstructives were not especially active in the session of 1878. Much of Mr. Parnell's time was spent on a Parliamentary Committee appointed to consider how best to facilitate public business, which really meant how best to stamp out obstruction. The Committee in due course made its suggestions, from which Mr. Parnell differed in a minority report;<sup>2</sup> and though these suggestions received the sanction of Parliament next year, public business was not advanced.

In the meantime the Government passed in the session of 1878 an Irish Intermediate Act. While still leaving the Royal Free Schools and Erasmus Smith Schools to Protestants, it set up for all, Catholics as well as others, a system of public examinations, and with a capital sum of £1,000,000 taken from the Church Surplus Funds, it provided scholarships and prizes to successful students, and to intermediate schools gave large sums by way of result fees.<sup>3</sup> The followers of Mr. Butt pointed in triumph to this Act as the best justification of Mr. Butt's policy. And Mr. Butt himself, in the closing days of the year, wrote a public letter again condemning obstruction in vigorous terms. He asked in indignation how any right-minded man could take the oath of allegiance to the Queen, and then use his power as a member of Parliament to thwart and baffle all her measures.<sup>4</sup> This language was very grateful to English public opinion, as it was to nominal Home Rule members. But it did not promote peace in the Irish Party, it won Mr. Butt no new adherents, nor did it weaken Mr. Parnell's determination to continue an active policy, nor lessen his influence with the masses of the Irish people. A further vigorous defence of his policy, and a vigorous attack on his opponents by Mr. Butt in February 1879, were equally barren of results. The obstructives remained unmoved, and their young leader was unconvinced and undismayed.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> O'Brien's *Parnell*, i. 150-54.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 155.

<sup>3</sup> O'Brien, *Fifty Years of Concessions to Ireland*, ii. 324-26.

<sup>4</sup> *Annual Register*, pp. 209-10.

<sup>5</sup> *Parnell Movement*, pp. 161-3.

By that time the old leader was nearing the end. And undoubtedly the events of the last couple of years hastened his death. Anxious for success, he felt that he had failed. He could see nothing but ruin in Mr. Parnell's policy, but he gradually realized that it was winning adherents and that he himself was losing ground; and in 1878 he wished to retire from Parliament. His resignation was not accepted by the nation and he was persuaded to remain. But he could not attend regularly in Parliament, having to depend on his profession for a living.<sup>1</sup> In addition to this his health began to fail. In the summer of 1878 he told his friend, Dr. O'Leary, of weakness, of palpitation, of uneasy sensations at the heart, of a want of readiness and vigour of thought, and he feared that the end was not far distant. He soon rallied, however, and at the meeting in February 1879 his great powers seemed at their best. Yet even a casual observer could see that death was near. After the meeting he fell ill, and on the 13th of May following the end came.<sup>2</sup> With the modesty of greatness his desire was that he should be buried in the little churchyard of his native parish of Stranorlar, with as little expense as possible, and without ostentation or parade.<sup>3</sup> Thus, in accordance with his own wish, there was no great funeral procession, no grave in Glasnevin, no proud monument, no inscription to recount his services to the land he loved well. But his countrymen bore him in kindly remembrance, and if many thought it fortunate for Ireland that he then passed away, it was because they saw that his policy had failed and his methods had grown obsolete; because in the stormy times that had come it was necessary that the helm should be grasped by a more vigorous hand.

<sup>1</sup> *Parnell Movement*, p. 162.

<sup>2</sup> O'Brien's *Parnell*, i. 179-82.

<sup>3</sup> Davitt's *Fall of Feudalism*, pp. 96-97.



## CHAPTER XII

### *The Land League*

THE years which followed the Land Act of 1870 were prosperous years in Ireland. The seasons were good, the crops abundant, the price of farm stock abnormally high. The Land Act in no way curtailed the landlord's right to raise rents, and he took full advantage of his powers. Yet the tenants willingly paid the increased rents. Whenever land was to be let there were many competitors for its possession, and when a tenant was evicted the landlord had no difficulty in finding a new tenant for the vacant holding. There was then no powerful organization to protect the evicted, and no one to raise the cry of grabber, and in their greed for land the farmers forgot the interests of their own class to satisfy the rapacity of the landlords.<sup>1</sup> In 1877 there came a change. In that year the potato crop was barely half that of the preceding year; in 1878 the crop was equally a failure; and in 1879 there was but a third of the average yield. Bankrupt and starving men could not pay rent, but the landlords, caring nothing for the people, insisted to the full on their legal rights; and as rents were not and could not be paid they commenced to evict. In 1877 the number of such evictions was 1323; in 1878, 1749; and in 1879 the number had risen to 2667. With famine and eviction the outlook was certainly dark, and it seemed as if the horrors of 1847 were to be renewed.<sup>2</sup>

Nor would the Government do anything to stay evictions or relieve distress. With distress in Great Britain and trouble abroad Ireland was forgotten, and when Parliament met in February 1879 its chief concern was about the affairs of

<sup>1</sup> *New Ireland*, pp. 429-30.

<sup>2</sup> *Parnell Movement*, pp. 165-7.

Afghanistan and Zululand. Nothing was promised to Ireland except an amendment of its Grand Jury laws.<sup>1</sup> At a later period of the session Lord Clare's Convention Act of 1793 was repealed;<sup>2</sup> and for the first time for nearly a hundred years Irishmen selected and delegated by their countrymen were free to meet and discuss public questions. There was also a University Bill passed, which abolished the Queen's University and set up the Royal University in its place. The Queen's colleges, however, were left undisturbed, still shunned by Catholics as godless colleges, and as such barred by Catholic bishops. Nor was any concession made except to allow Catholics in common with others to be examined for degrees, for the Royal University did not require residence, and was nothing more than an examining board.<sup>3</sup>

Nothing further would be done for Ireland. As if in contempt of the country, Lord Beaconsfield had appointed Mr. James Lowther Irish Chief Secretary. He was but an ignorant, horse-racing country squire, more at home in the racing paddock than in Parliament, less familiar with the language of statesmen, or even of intelligent politicians, than with the language of the stable and the horse jockey. In the end of May, Mr. O'Donnell, M.P. for Galway, called attention to the state of Ireland, and Mr. Parnell and others supported and emphasized the statements of Mr. O'Donnell. But Mr. Lowther, who knew nothing and cared nothing about Ireland, undertook to say that these statements were exaggerated, and that the depression in Ireland was "neither so prevalent nor so acute as the depression existing in other parts of the United Kingdom."<sup>4</sup> A month later Mr. O'Connor Power, M.P. for Mayo, one of the ablest of the Irish members, and one of the greatest orators in Parliament, moved the adjournment of the House to call attention to the subject of Irish distress. But neither the strong case he made nor the eloquence with which he spoke made any impression on the Government benches. The members talked and laughed while he spoke, so that he

<sup>1</sup> *Annual Register*, pp. 1-2, 33.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 73.

<sup>3</sup> *Fifty Years of Concessions to Ireland*, ii.      <sup>4</sup> *New Ireland*, pp. 436-8.



was heard with difficulty.<sup>1</sup> They were willing to help the Government to pass new rules for putting down obstruction, which meant putting down Parnell,<sup>2</sup> but they were not willing to listen to the cry of Irish distress, and closed their eyes as well as their ears even while famine was advancing with rapid strides.

There was then a more militant spirit in Ireland than that which existed in 1847. The Irishmen of 1879 were not willing to starve or be evicted, and if the Government would not help them they were determined to help themselves. The most prominent exponent of the new gospel of defiance and self-help was Michael Davitt. The son of a Mayo peasant, he was born in 1846 at the little village of Straide. His parents, who had passed safely through the famine, were evicted in 1853, and the whole family, father, mother, son and two daughters, crossed to England and settled at Haslingden in Lancashire. To supplement the scanty earnings of his father, the little boy was sent at an early age to work in a mill, and one day his arm got caught by the mill machinery and was so seriously injured that it had to be amputated. He had already acquired some education and was clever and quick to learn, and perhaps the terrible misfortune which involved the loss of his right arm caused him to turn to books with fresh eagerness. At all events, he read and acquired knowledge, and was soon able to contribute to O'Leary's Fenian organ, *The Irish People*. He joined the Fenian organization and passed unharmed through the exciting times of 1867; but in 1870 he was arrested in London as a Fenian arms-agent and on the evidence of an informer was convicted. Sentenced to fifteen years' penal servitude, he was in 1878 liberated on ticket-of-leave. He was then a fairly well-educated man, for in prison he had availed himself of every opportunity given him to read. In the midst of unwholesome surroundings and degraded companions he had remained a good man, with high ideals and loftiness of aim. In the stone-breaking yard or in the prison-cell at Dart-

<sup>1</sup> O'Brien's *Life of Parnell*, i. 185.

<sup>2</sup> *Annual Register*, p. 34.

moor, he often thought of Ireland and its wrongs ; and when he was once more free his first anxiety was to strike at Irish landlordism and British misgovernment.<sup>1</sup>

The time was not unfavourable for a new forward movement. Famine was coming, the landlords were evicting, the Government callous. Already the ablest of the American Fenians, John Devoy, an ex-prisoner like Davitt himself, was anxious for an alliance between the Fenians and the Parliamentarians. As long as the latter were under the leadership of Butt there was no hope for Ireland in Parliament, and the Fenians turned from constitutional agitation with contempt. But with Parnell it was different. His militant attitude, his evident capacity to lead, his hatred of England, captivated thousands of Fenians both at home and abroad, and won them over to parliamentary methods. On the other hand, Devoy hoped for little from Fenianism until the farmers joined, and he wanted an alliance between revolutionists and Parliamentarians, on the basis of the destruction of landlordism, leading up to Irish independence. This came to be called the New Departure. It highly commended itself to Davitt, and when he landed in America in August 1878, he and Devoy won over to their views large numbers of the Clan-na-Gael. They could not, however, succeed with the Supreme Council of the I.R.B. Influenced by Kickham, it would have nothing to do with constitutional movements. Kickham was a man of much literary capacity, pure-minded and unselfish, but with little ability for practical politics. He ought to have seen that the American Fenians were powerless owing to the enforcement of neutrality laws by the United States ; that the home Fenians could only break out into futile rebellion ; and that to expect them with revolvers and guns to overcome the might of England was as reasonable as to expect that a modern fortress could be captured with bows and arrows. Yet he clung to the old worn-out methods, which were powerless either to do good to Ireland or harm to England. At the meeting of

<sup>1</sup> *New Ireland*, pp. 431-2 ; Davitt's *Leaves from a Prison Diary*.



the Supreme Council in Paris at which both Devoy and Davitt attended—both being members—he had his way, and no alliance was to be entered into with the Parliamentarians, though individual members might join the open movement if they pleased.<sup>1</sup>

Nor did Parnell seem to regard the new departure with special favour. In October 1878 the Clan-na-Gael leaders were willing to join him if he dropped the demand for Federal Home Rule in favour of a general declaration demanding self-government; if he vigorously agitated the Land question on the basis of a peasant proprietary, excluded sectarian issues from his platforms, and helped all struggling nationalities within the British Empire.<sup>2</sup> He was in favour of most of the items in this programme, and he liked the Fenians and wanted their assistance. He would not, however, have any formal alliance with them, and at no time was he willing to become a Fenian. But though Kickham on the one hand and Parnell on the other held aloof, the new departure was becoming a reality. Devoy in America was an active propagandist; Davitt was equally so at home, and events were so shaping themselves that Irish farmers were compelled to agitate, and a beginning was made for the final destruction of Irish landlordism.

The first public meeting was held on the 19th of April 1879, at Irishtown in Mayo. The parish priest of the place, Canon Burke, was also a small landlord. His father, within living memory, had doubled the rents of the several holdings, with the result that when bad times came arrears accumulated. Canon Burke was a kindly and a not ungenerous man, but he had the landlord's notions about landlord rights, and he refused either to forgive the arrears or reduce the rents, and threatened the tenants with eviction. Respect for his office made it difficult to rouse public opinion against him, and as local men were unwilling to take action, Davitt was appealed to, and he, after consulting with some friends in Claremorris, resolved to hold a public meeting. The necessary organiza-

<sup>1</sup> O'Brien's *Parnell*, i. 163-7, 176-7.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 168-9.

tion was in the hands of Mr. John O'Kane, Mr. P. W. Nally, Mr. John Walsh, Mr. J. P. Quinn, and others, and both local leaders and speakers were in nearly every case Fenians; so also were many of those who formed the audience of 7000. Sons of farmers, some employed in shops, some on their father's farms, they hated landlordism and longed for its destruction. Being Fenians, they were opponents of the clergy and had no dread of Canon Burke. Their example inspired the farmers, who were not Fenians, with courage; and if the former supplied the greater part of the audience who attended these meetings, it was the Fenians who supplied the organizing capacity and discipline, the enthusiasm and courage so necessary to carry a popular movement to success. Davitt himself; Mr. Thomas Brennan, a commercial clerk in Dublin with considerable ability as a speaker; Mr. O'Connor Power, M.P., more eloquent still; Mr. John Ferguson of Glasgow, and Mr. James Daly of Castlebar were the principal speakers. They demanded the abolition of landlordism and the establishment of a peasant proprietary, denounced rack-renting and eviction with special vehemence, and were answered back by the thousands round the platform with the cry of "Down with landlordism—the land for the people!" One result of the meeting was that Canon Burke ceased his threats of eviction and gave an abatement of 25 per cent in the rents. And this led to other meetings where similar eloquence and enthusiasm were displayed.<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Parnell noted these events but refused to attend any meetings. For one thing, the priests were hostile, and he wanted no quarrel with the priests. But when Mr. Lowther in the House of Commons denied even the existence of Irish distress, Parnell delayed no longer and crossed over to Ireland to attend the Westport meeting on the 8th of June. And now the popular movement was attacked from an unexpected quarter, the assailant being none other than John MacHale, Archbishop of Tuam. He was then nearly ninety years of age, feeble in body and in mind, entirely controlled by his

<sup>1</sup> Davitt's *Fall of Feudalism*, pp. 147-51.



nephew, the Very Rev. Dr. MacHale, a man with no popular sympathies. To the latter, and not to the great popular champion, was attributed the letter signed "John, Archbishop of Tuam." It attacked the new movement as that of a few designing men who sought only to promote their personal interests, a movement tending to impiety and disorder in Church and in society. They were ungenerous words from the man whom O'Connell had styled the Lion of the Fold of Judah, who next to O'Connell was the greatest popular champion of his time. But the letter did not deter Parnell nor spoil the meeting. Even a larger number assembled than at Irishtown, and 8000 men cheered long and loud when Parnell advised them not to submit to eviction, but to "keep a firm grip of their homesteads."<sup>1</sup>

In the next month Parnell found himself again in opposition to the clergy. A vacancy occurred in the representation of Ennis, and Mr. William O'Brien, a Catholic Whig, a place-hunter, and afterwards a judge, had the support of the Bishop and priests. Parnell put forward a Mr. J. L. Finnigan, an advanced Home Ruler, and the latter was placed at the head of the poll. But Parnell disliked opposing the clergy, and when the Royal University was passing through the House of Commons he favoured the Catholic bishops' demand for a Catholic University, and expressed his entire disapproval of the Bill as failing to satisfy their demand.<sup>2</sup>

Davitt was meanwhile holding meetings, and the cry of "Down with landlordism" was raised from many a platform. And when Parliament rose Parnell at once returned to Ireland, and during the months of August, September and October attended meetings Sunday after Sunday, and was listened to by thousands, anxious to hear what he had to say. His oft-repeated advice to the farmers was to combine, to ask for a reduction of rent when necessary, and when the reduction was refused to pay no rent. As for exterminating

<sup>1</sup> Davitt's *Fall of Feudalism*, pp. 153-5.

<sup>2</sup> O'Brien's *Life of Parnell*, i. 191-2.

the people, he assured them no Government would attempt it; let them band themselves together and they were invincible.<sup>1</sup>

Davitt in August had held a County Convention in Castlebar, and founded the National Land League of Mayo to protect tenants and fight landlordism; and he had been urging Parnell to turn this into a national organization, with a central body in Dublin and branches throughout the land. But Parnell hesitated, believing that the central body would be held responsible for the conduct of the branches, and that it would be impossible to effectually restrain the reckless spirits of which some of these branches might be composed.<sup>2</sup> Finally, however, he gave way, and on the 21st of October the National League of Mayo was turned into the Irish National Land League. Mr. Parnell had invited the attendance of representative public men, who met at the Imperial Hotel, Dublin, and there a central body was formed charged with the conduct of the agitation. The declared objects of the Land League were to reduce rack-rents and promote peasant proprietary; its methods were to be organization of the farmers, and protection of those threatened with eviction or actually evicted for unjust rents. Mr. Parnell was elected President of the League; Messrs. A. J. Kettle, Davitt and Brennan, Secretaries; and Messrs. Biggar and Sullivan, M.P.'s, and Egan, Treasurers. It was resolved that an appeal should be made to the Irish race for funds to sustain the new movement, and that Mr. Parnell should proceed to America and make the appeal in person. By that time the suspicion with which the clergy at first regarded the agitation had partially disappeared, and of the fifty-three members of the Central Committee of the League no less than thirteen were priests.<sup>3</sup>

In November Messrs. Davitt, Daly and Killeen, B.L., were prosecuted for speeches delivered at Gurteen in Sligo County, and Mr. Brennan for a strong speech made near Balla. But the Government despaired of a conviction and the prosecutions were dropped, with consequent loss of prestige to the Govern-

<sup>1</sup> *Annual Register*, pp. 94-95.      <sup>2</sup> O'Brien's *Life of Parnell*, i. 191.

<sup>3</sup> Davitt's *Fall of Feudalism*, pp. 170-73.



ment itself, and a consequent increase of influence and strength to the League. Mr. Parnell delayed his departure for America lest it might be said that he was afraid of being prosecuted. He even attended the meeting in Balla and congratulated Mr. Brennan on his speech,<sup>1</sup> and he attended the trial in Sligo, and it was not till the end of December that he left Ireland.

Accompanied by Mr. John Dillon, he landed at New York in the first week in January. By that time the reality of the distress, especially in Connaught, could not be ignored even by the Government, and the Lord-Lieutenant's wife, the Duchess of Marlborough, formed a committee to collect food and clothing for the starving people. The Lord Mayor of Dublin, Mr. Gray, M.P., formed the Mansion House Committee for the same purpose; and in America the *New York Herald* also formed a committee, and invited Mr. Parnell's co-operation. But he refused. He was determined that no funds subscribed should go, as in 1847, into the pockets of the landlords. He appealed for help not to subsidize but to destroy landlordism, the fruitful parent of so many famines; he appealed to the Irish in America to unite among themselves and with their brethren at home for the old land, and he appealed for American sympathy against English misgovernment.<sup>2</sup>

He was received with enthusiasm. Governors of States, mayors of cities, bishops, judges, senators, members of Congress, eminent professional men, distinguished military officers, merchants and newspaper editors, crowded to his platforms. At New York he addressed 8000 persons, with a judge in the chair. At Newark a detachment of the Ninth Regiment escorted him through the streets. At Philadelphia Mr. Childs, the editor of the *Public Ledger*, handed him a subscription of one thousand dollars. At Boston the Mayor was in the chair, and the great orator, Wendell Phillips, was one of the speakers. At Indianapolis the Governor of the State met him at the railway station. At Toledo he was received with a military salute of twenty-one guns. At Buffalo and Chicago he received

<sup>1</sup> *Annual Register*, pp. 100-101.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 1880, pp. 3-4.

the freedom of the city. At Washington he was invited to address the House of Representatives, an honour never before tendered to a stranger except to General Lafayette and Kossuth. The House suspended its regular session to hear him vigorously denounce Irish landlordism. At Toronto and Montreal in Canada his welcome was enthusiastic, and at the latter place he was styled "the uncrowned king." In two months he visited sixty-two cities, and travelled nearly 11,000 miles, and received in all, partly for political purposes but principally for the relief of distress, a sum of £50,000. He also founded the American Land League, with its central body and its branches like the home organization, with John Devoy as one of its treasurers, and in its councils cordially acting together both constitutionalist and Clan-na-Gael.<sup>1</sup> Leaving Dillon to carry on the work of the League, Parnell then crossed to Ireland. A dissolution of Parliament had been sprung upon the country, and it was this which suddenly ended his triumphal progress through America and caused his sudden return home. He arrived at Queenstown on the 21st of March, nearly a fortnight after Lord Beaconsfield had announced the dissolution in a letter addressed to the Duke of Marlborough.

At the opening of Parliament in February, Mr. Shaw, who succeeded Butt as Home Rule leader, proposed an amendment to the Address, calling for comprehensive measures of relief, and also for legislation on the tenure of land, the neglect of the latter being the true cause of the constantly recurring disaffection and distress in Ireland. The Government, however, opposed and defeated the amendment, though it was proved by the official returns of the Registrar-General that the state of Ireland was serious. These figures, in fact, "staggered many who had previously been disposed to believe that the Irish distress had no serious foundation except in the imaginations of Home Rulers and anti-rent agitators."<sup>2</sup> All the Government did was to pass a Relief of Distress Act, under which a sum of £1,000,000 was voted from the Church

<sup>1</sup> Davitt's *Fall of Feudalism*, pp. 193-211; O'Brien's *Life of Parnell*, i. 204-7.

<sup>2</sup> *Annual Register*, p. 10.



Surplus Fund to Irish landlords and sanitary authorities to spend on drainage and reclamation of lands. Paid out for labour to the tenants, it came back to the landlord as rent, while the tenant starved.<sup>1</sup> In the next month, with a callousness rarely equalled, Lord Beaconsfield appealed to the country on an anti-Irish cry. The Irish demand for Home Rule he characterised as a danger scarcely less disastrous than pestilence and famine, and those Liberals who favoured such a policy were labouring for the disintegration of the United Kingdom, having already "attempted and failed to enfeeble our Colonies by their policy of decomposition."<sup>2</sup>

Lord Beaconsfield's opponents, however, did not allow the electoral battle to be confined to the subject of Ireland, and the whole Tory policy was vigorously impeached. As far back as 1876 Mr. Gladstone had come forth from the retirement of his library to denounce before the world the horrors perpetrated in Bulgaria under Turkish rule, where rape and robbery were the common acts of civil and military officials, and Government was an organized massacre. Though the public mind of England was profoundly stirred, Lord Beaconsfield continued to support Turkey, and on her behalf had well-nigh plunged the country into war.<sup>3</sup> But the seed sown by Mr. Gladstone ripened in good time, and when the dissolution came, besides their support of the Turks, the Tories had provided abundant material for attack. "At home," said Mr. Gladstone, "they have neglected legislation, aggravated the public distress, augmented the public expenditure, and plunged the finances into a series of deficits unexampled in modern times." And abroad they had aggrandised Russia, lured Turkey to her ruin, replaced the Christian population of Macedonia under a debasing yoke, "and from day to day, under a Ministry called, as if in mockery, Conservative, the nation is perplexed with fear of change."<sup>4</sup> The answer of the nation to this formidable indictment was to bring in a verdict of guilty, and

<sup>1</sup> *Annual Register*, pp. 9-12; O'Brien's *Parnell*, i. 208-9.

<sup>2</sup> *Annual Register*, pp. 32-33. <sup>3</sup> Morley's *Gladstone*, ii. 156-77.

<sup>4</sup> *Annual Register*, pp. 34-35.

when the General Election was over only 240 Tories had been returned to Parliament. Of the remainder 347 were Liberals and 65 Irish Home Rulers.<sup>1</sup>

In Mr. Parnell's absence the Irish members had advised the Irish in England to vote for the Liberals, and it was calculated that they turned the scale in forty constituencies. Mr. Parnell would have preferred to support the Tories, believing that Lord Beaconsfield would have plunged the Empire into some grievous difficulty from which benefit would accrue to Ireland. In Ireland his anxiety was to strike at the Whigs and Whig Home Rulers. Travelling by special train, he visited many constituencies and was thus able to do the work of many. And his success was considerable. In Mayo he turned out the moderate Home Ruler, Mr. Browne; in Roscommon, the Whig O'Connor Don; in Cork City, the two sitting members; in Cork County he all but succeeded in ousting Mr. Shaw. He was himself elected for Meath, Mayo and Cork City; Mr. Dillon was elected for Tipperary; Mr. Sexton for Sligo; Mr. T. P. O'Connor for Galway City; Mr. O'Kelly for Roscommon; Mr. T. D. Sullivan for Westmeath; Mr. John Barry for Wexford. Messrs. Biggar and Justin MacCarthy were re-elected, and so was Mr. Gray, the Lord Mayor of Dublin.<sup>2</sup> Many of those elected were young and new to Parliament, and not a few were destined to acquire fame. Mr. T. D. Sullivan was the author of well-known songs and ballads, and though not so eloquent as his brother Alexander, was a useful member and an honest man. Mr. Justin MacCarthy was a cultured Cork man, whose *History of Our Own Times* was even then known and admired throughout the English-speaking world. Mr. Gray, the owner of the *Freeman's Journal*, was son of Sir John Gray, and had even more than his father's ability. In honesty and courage Mr. John Dillon resembled his father, the Young Irelander and rebel of 1848. Mr. T. P. O'Connor was a brilliant journalist, eloquent both with voice and pen. Mr. Sexton, hitherto unknown, gave evidence during his election

<sup>1</sup> Morley's *Gladstone*, ii. 216-20.

<sup>2</sup> *New Ireland*, pp. 447-9.



contest of great oratorical powers. Mr. O'Kelly's life was full of adventure and romance. A Fenian and a soldier of the Foreign Legion of France, he had fought in Mexico and in Cuba, and had been an inmate of a Mexican as well as of a Spanish prison. Except Mr. Gray, all these favoured Mr. Parnell's advanced policy, and when the Home Rule party met to elect its Chairman, Mr. Parnell was elected by 23 votes, only 18 votes being cast for his opponent Mr. Shaw.<sup>1</sup>

Had the whole 65 members returned as Home Rulers acted loyally together much might have been done under such a vigorous leader as Mr. Parnell. But it was calculated that four of the 65 could scarcely be called Home Rulers at all;<sup>2</sup> many more were not sincere and refused even to attend the meeting at which Mr. Shaw was deposed; and Mr. Shaw's supporters, refusing to abide by the decision arrived at, remained in the House of Commons on the Government side, while the Parnellites crossed over to the Opposition side in pursuance of their avowed policy of Independent Opposition.

It was no doubt well that the Tories had been driven from office, that Mr. Gladstone, the friend of Ireland, was Premier, that three of his colleagues were such friends of liberty and justice as Mr. Bright, Mr. Chamberlain and Mr. Forster; and it was an augury of better things that the expiring Coercion Act was not to be renewed. Yet it was plain that the Government were not about to embark on any Irish land legislation; nor did the Queen's Speech, though dealing with Turkey and India and South Africa, promise anything to Ireland but an extension of the borough franchise and a possible measure for the relief of distress.<sup>3</sup> And meantime 500,000 persons were on the books of the Irish Relief Committees; rents were not and could not be paid, with a consequent large increase of evictions; and at Land League meetings held all over the land landlordism was vigorously denounced, and language of menace used towards the evictors

<sup>1</sup> *Parnell Movement*, pp. 175-96.

<sup>2</sup> Morley's *Gladstone*, ii. 220.

<sup>3</sup> *Annual Register*, pp. 65-66.

and towards any Government which would be wicked enough to sustain them<sup>1</sup>

This was the condition of things in June, when Mr. O'Connor Power brought in a Bill to stay evictions by compelling the landlord in every case to compensate for disturbance. The Chief Secretary, Mr. Forster, instead of opposing, took the matter in hand himself, and brought in a Compensation for Disturbance Bill on the part of the Government. It did not go far, and only entitled an evicted tenant to compensation when he could show that his inability to pay rent was not due to idleness or want of thrift. It passed the House of Commons but was ignominiously thrown out by the Lords. Mr. Parnell suggested that the Bill should be reintroduced and as part of the Appropriation Bill sent again to the Lords. But Mr. Forster refused to do this, and the Irish farmers, left to the mercy of the evictors, had to fall back on agitation and organization as their only resource.<sup>2</sup>

When Parliament rose in August, Mr. Parnell crossed over to Ireland and attended a series of meetings. He was not an orator, but he could say always what he wanted to say, and the thousands who listened to him had no difficulty in understanding what he wished them to do. Aiming then at the destruction of landlordism and the establishment of a peasant proprietary, he advised them to unite, to combine, to be loyal to each other, to refuse to pay unjust rents or submit to eviction, to have nothing to do with farms from which others had been evicted. "What are you to do," he said at Ennis in September, "to a tenant who bids for a farm from which his neighbour has been evicted?" "Shoot him," said a voice from the crowd. "I think," said Mr. Parnell, "I heard somebody say, 'Shoot him,' but I wish to point out to you a very much better way. When a man takes a farm from which another has been evicted you must show him on the roadside when you meet him, you must show him in the streets of the town, you must show him at

<sup>1</sup> *Parnell Movement*, pp. 197-9.

<sup>2</sup> *Annual Register*, pp. 79-88, 104; O'Brien's *Parnell*, i. 230-33.



the shop counter, in the fair and in the market-place, and even in the house of worship, by leaving him severely alone, by putting him into a moral Coventry, by isolating him from his kind as if he was a leper of old ; you must show him your detestation of the crime he has committed, and you may depend upon it that there will be no man so full of avarice, so lost to shame as to dare the public opinion of all right-thinking men and to transgress your unwritten code of laws."<sup>1</sup>

Before the month was out this advice was acted upon in the case of Captain Boycott in Mayo, who dwelt near Ballinrobe, on the picturesque shores of Lough Mask. As agent to the Earl of Erne, he refused to accept the rents offered by the tenants, standing out for the full amounts due, and then issuing processes of ejectment. The tenants retaliated by attacking the process-server and driving him into the shelter of Lough Mask House. But further, partly by persuasion, principally by terror and threats, they got Captain Boycott's servants and labourers to leave him. No one would save his crops, no one would drive his car, the smith would not shoe his horses, the laundress would not wash for him, the grocer would not supply him with goods ; even the post-boy was warned not to deliver his letters. The Ulster Orangemen came to the rescue, and fifty of them, escorted by police and military with two field-pieces, came to Lough Mask. They saved the Captain's crops, valued at £350, but at an estimated cost to the State and to the Orange Society of £3500 ; and when they left Lough Mask House became vacant, for Captain Boycott fled to England. The genial and witty parish priest of the Lough Mask district, Father John O'Malley, suggested to his friend Mr. Redpath, an American journalist, perplexed for a suitable word, that boycott was a better word than ostracise, the latter being too difficult to be understood by the people. The hint was taken, the word used in this sense gradually gained currency and became incorporated in the English language, and of all

<sup>1</sup> O'Brien's *Life of Parnell*, i. 236-7 ; *Annual Register*, pp. 108-10.

the weapons used by the Land League none was more dreaded by landlords and their friends than the terrible weapon of boycotting.<sup>1</sup>

All this time the Land League was spreading all over Ireland and even in Great Britain, while Mr. Davitt was extending it in America,<sup>2</sup> public meetings were being held every Sunday; the receipts at the central branch were coming in by hundreds and thousands of pounds, the police and process servers had been openly defied in the early part of the year in the wild and desolate regions of Carraroe, and since then many collisions had occurred between people and police.<sup>3</sup> And there were agrarian outrages too. In Mayo a bailiff named Fecrick had been shot, and a landlord named Lewin fired at; in Wexford a landlord's son had been shot dead, and in Galway Lord Montmorris had met a similar fate. All this had occurred before Parnell's Ennis speech and could not, therefore, be attributed to any advice he gave; but none the less these outrages came from the strained relations between landlord and tenant, and from the excitement which prevailed.<sup>4</sup>

Mr. Forster was perplexed. He had visited Ireland in the terrible year of 1846, and what he then saw made an indelible impression on his mind. With the generous love of the Quaker for his fellow-men, he relieved suffering and induced others to relieve, and he wished to give permanent relief to the Irish people.<sup>5</sup> And when he took office as Chief Secretary in 1880, his desire was to do good to Ireland.<sup>6</sup> The Irish members expected much from him, and were grievously disappointed that he had made no attempt to overawe the House of Lords after the rejection of the Disturbance Bill, still more so at his sending police and military to aid in the work of eviction; and when he announced in Parliament that he had caused buckshot to be served out to the police instead of

<sup>1</sup> *Annual Register*, pp. 118-21; Davitt, pp. 274-9.

<sup>2</sup> Davitt, pp. 247-55.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 213-30.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* 261-3, 268-9; *Annual Register*, p. 110.

<sup>5</sup> Wemyss Reid's *Life of Forster*, i. 169, 172-203.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* 235-6.



the more dangerous ball cartridge, an Irish member hurled at him across the floor of the House the epithet, Buckshot Forster.<sup>1</sup> But angry as the Irish members might be, the English newspapers and Tory orators were more so. They assailed Forster as condoning illegality, leaving murder undetected, and allowing incitements to murder to go unpunished. Gradually he was thus driven down the abyss, and in the beginning of November Messrs. Parnell, Biggar, Dillon, T. D. Sullivan and Sexton, and nine other prominent Leaguers were prosecuted for conspiracy to incite the tenants not to pay their rents, and in consequence to injure the landlords. The trial lasted from the end of December to the end of January, and resulted in a disagreement, one juror declaring that ten jurymen were for acquittal.<sup>2</sup> To Mr. Forster the result was no surprise. He was not sanguine of obtaining a conviction, and satisfied that the ordinary law was unable to grapple with the Land League, was already pleading for coercion. The Lord-Lieutenant, Lord Cowper, vigorously supported his demand. But Mr. Gladstone was unwilling to acquiesce. Mr. Bright declared that for the state of Ireland force was no remedy, and Mr. Chamberlain's views were similar.<sup>3</sup> Forster, however, had supporters within the Cabinet, and was persuasive and persistent, and in addition threatened to resign.<sup>4</sup> At last the Ministry yielded, and when Parliament opened on the 6th of January the Queen's Speech announced that an Irish Land Bill would be introduced, but that it would be preceded by a Coercion Bill.<sup>5</sup>

In the debate on the Address, Mr. Parnell made a carefully-prepared and very able speech. Condemning outrages and deprecating violence of language, he claimed that the Land League agitation was a purely constitutional movement. There had been, he admitted, some strong speeches made by thoughtless and irresponsible orators, but outrages had not

<sup>1</sup> Davitt, p. 265.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 286-93; *Annual Register*, pp. 112-13, 115-16.

<sup>3</sup> *Parnell Movement*, p. 206.

<sup>4</sup> Wemyss Reid, ii. 256-73; O'Brien's *Parnell*, i. 258-62.

<sup>5</sup> *Annual Register*, pp. 5-6.

always followed, and the very few which took place had been mischievously exaggerated by the English Press. He claimed for the people the right to organize and meet and demand reforms, and he warned the Government that coercion would increase rather than lessen their difficulties. Speaking without passion, and supported by statistics, he made such an impression that an Irish Tory member described the speech as one of the most adroit, intelligent and sagacious that he had ever heard delivered in the House of Commons.<sup>1</sup>

But Mr. Forster was not convinced, and when the debate on the Address was concluded, he introduced his Coercion Bill. It was called a Bill for the Protection of Person and Property in Ireland, was to last until the end of September 1882, and enabled the Lord-Lieutenant to arrest and detain in prison any one whom he reasonably suspected of unlawful acts. Mr. Forster was an eloquent speaker, and in describing the condition of Ireland it was a lurid picture which he drew. Nothing was omitted that could strengthen his case. Ireland was seething with lawlessness; agrarian outrages for the year were the highest on record; terror and intimidation were everywhere; houses and haystacks were burned; men taken from their beds at night and carded, perhaps maimed or murdered; and if they themselves were uninjured, at least their cattle were houghed or killed. No man was safe, and the law-abiding were shaking with fear. If a man worked for one who was boycotted, if he paid his rent against the wishes of his fellow-tenants, if he took an evicted farm, if he gave evidence against an accused person, or being a juryman convicted,—if he did any of these things he was marked for vengeance. The planners of these outrages were well known to the police; they were the *mauvais sujets*, the village tyrants of their districts; and Mr. Forster was convinced that when they were safely under lock and key the law-abiding citizen might sleep in peace. He ended by saying that to bring in any Coercion Bill was the most painful duty of his life, and that if he had thought such a duty would have devolved on him he would never have taken the office of Irish

<sup>1</sup> Hansard, cclvii. 195-203, 251.



Secretary.<sup>1</sup> On the Irish benches there was no sympathetic response, and for five nights the Irish members debated and obstructed. At length, on the 2nd of February, after a continuous sitting of forty-one hours, the Speaker intervened. He described the speeches made as irrelevant, and the motions for adjournment as dilatory and obstructive, and stopping all further discussion he put the question, and the first reading was carried by an enormous majority.<sup>2</sup>

Challenged as to why he acted in this high-handed fashion, the Speaker replied that he acted on his own responsibility and from a sense of duty to the House, and the House by an enormous majority sustained him. But the Irish members were not to be silenced with impunity, and in criticizing the Speaker's conduct many speeches were made and much time wasted.<sup>3</sup> In these circumstances Mr. Gladstone got the assent of the House to new and drastic rules of procedure, the effect of which was to make the Speaker an autocrat. At any stage of a measure he was empowered to summarily stop all discussion and put the question, provided that there were 300 members at least present, that a Minister moved for urgency, and was sustained by a majority of three to one.<sup>4</sup> The new rules were manifestly aimed at the Irish members, and were not passed without some passionate scenes. On one occasion the whole party of thirty-six were suspended for the sitting.<sup>5</sup> When they resumed attendance their obstructive tactics were renewed, and in spite of the new rules the Protection of Person and Property Bill had not passed its final stages until the 28th of February. No Coercion Bill for Ireland has ever been delayed in the House of Lords, and on the 2nd of March it received the Royal Assent. It was soon supplemented by an Arms Act,<sup>6</sup> making it penal to carry arms in any district proclaimed by the Lord-Lieutenant. The enormous powers given by these Acts Mr. Forster proceeded to use, and before the end of March more than one prison was filled with the

<sup>1</sup> Hansard, cclvii. 1209-35.    <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 2033-4; Morley's *Gladstone*, ii. 292-3.

<sup>3</sup> Hansard, cclviii. 7-43.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* 155-6.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* 69-88.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* cclix. 1481.

"village tyrants and dissolute ruffians" which he believed were keeping Ireland in disorder. Mr. Davitt's ticket-of-leave had also been cancelled in the end of February, and when the first of the Coercion Acts was passed he was already in Portland Prison.

With a sigh of relief Mr. Gladstone turned from the dreary work of repression to the work of reform, and on the 7th of April he introduced his Land Bill. A Commission—the Besborough Commission appointed in the previous year—had just recommended drastic changes in the land laws, and certainly Mr. Gladstone's Bill was a great step in advance. And it was certain also that it was a concession to agitation, and even to violence. Mr. Gladstone himself declared long after that "without the Land League the Act of 1881 would not now be on the Statute Book."<sup>1</sup> And an Ulster Liberal was assured by the Irish Attorney-General, Mr. Law, that no less than twenty-two Bills had been drafted by the Ministry, each an improvement on its predecessor; that "as lawlessness and outrage increased in Ireland, the Bill was broadened until it reached its final dimensions."<sup>2</sup> The Bill set up Land Courts to fix rents between landlord and tenant, giving the latter a judicial lease at the judicial rent fixed, giving him also free sale; and, further, the Bill facilitated land purchase.<sup>3</sup> This was a revolution rather than a reform. Mr. A. M. Sullivan has recorded that as he listened to Mr. Gladstone's speech introducing the Bill his mind went back to the days of Sharman Crawford and Lucas and Moore; he felt like one who, after the cruel trials and privations of the desert, had at length got a glimpse of the Promised Land.<sup>4</sup>

Yet on the Irish benches the Bill was coldly received. The enforcement of Coercion had embittered the Irish members against the Government. They spoke of Forster as if he were Cromwell, and Gladstone they hated because he sustained Forster; and any measure of reform coming from such men they would have received with suspicion and without gratitude.

<sup>1</sup> O'Brien's *Parnell*, i. 293.

<sup>3</sup> Hansard, cclx. 890-926.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 299.

<sup>4</sup> *New Ireland*, p. 457.



An Irish National Convention left Parnell free to accept or reject the Bill, and in fact Parnell did not vote for it on the second or third reading.<sup>1</sup> He found fault with it because it left the arrears due since the bad years of 1878-9 untouched, because it did nothing for leaseholders, or for the relief of congestion in the poverty-stricken districts of the West; and he had no hope that the Land Courts would be fair to the tenants.<sup>2</sup> But though Mr. Parnell did all this he wanted the Bill, and in reality was playing a deep game. To welcome the measure might have encouraged the Government to accept Tory amendments in Committee; to find fault induced the Government to accept amendments from the Irish members. Many of these amendments were moved by Mr. Parnell; others by Mr. Charles Russell—afterwards Lord Russell of Killowen; but the best work was done on the Irish side by a young man of twenty-five, Mr. T. M. Healy, M.P. for Wexford. Not even Mr. Gladstone had mastered more thoroughly the whole details of this most complicated measure. In 1880 Mr. Healy acted as Parnell's private Secretary; in 1881 he was prosecuted by Forster, and the same year was elected to Parliament, where, though he spoke often, his ability did not gain rapid recognition. But when the Land Bill emerged from Committee his fame was assured, and he has since shown himself to be one of the most brilliant Irishmen who ever entered the British Parliament.<sup>3</sup>

On the 30th of July the Land Bill was read a third time. In the House of Lords there was the usual whittling down of every concession to Ireland. Negotiations between the two Houses followed, ending in compromise and agreement, and on the 22nd of August the Bill received the Royal Assent.<sup>4</sup>

A fierce struggle was meanwhile carried on in Ireland. In spite of Forster's assurances not to use the Coercion Act except against dissolute ruffians and village tyrants, those imprisoned were usually men of unimpeachable character, the most trusted

<sup>1</sup> O'Brien's *Parnell*, i. 294; Hansard, cclxi. 928.

<sup>2</sup> Hansard, cclxi. 883-97.

<sup>3</sup> O'Connor's *Parnell Movement*, pp. 208-12; *Annual Register* (copy of original Land Bill and of Act passed).

<sup>4</sup> Hansard, cclxi.-cclxv.

and respected men in their districts. Mr. Dillon was sent to Kilmainham in May, and a fortnight later Father Sheehy of Kilmallock. The police were freely placed at the service of evicting landlords, and more than once collisions between people and police occurred. In one of these a woman was killed in Mayo, and in Sligo two men, while the police also suffered at the hands of the infuriated mob. Many districts were proclaimed, and over these magistrates armed with extraordinary powers swaggered like Turkish pashas. In Kilmallock a hot-headed bravo named Clifford Lloyd, in his capacity of resident magistrate, drove peaceful citizens off the streets with his stick, sentenced women at his residence to terms of imprisonment, and had girls prosecuted because one of them called a policeman "Clifford Lloyd's pet." These things were repeatedly brought before Parliament, but each time Forster defended both magistrates and police.<sup>1</sup> The struggle, however, was telling on him, and in June he wished to resign, sorrowfully bewailing that now he could never do what he wished to have done for Ireland.<sup>2</sup>

In the middle of August there was a gleam of hope. Outrages decreased in July and again in the first half of August.<sup>3</sup> Mr. Gladstone favoured the relaxation of coercion. Mr. Dillon had already been released owing to ill-health, and Mr. Gladstone wished for the release of Father Sheehy, thinking it would give the Land Act a better chance of fair play with the people. But Mr. Forster was still wedded to coercion, and wanted first of all to break up the Land League and weaken Parnell's hold on the people.<sup>4</sup> This task was not so easy. In September a great National Convention was held in Dublin to discuss the whole Irish situation, and lasted for three days. Mr. Parnell advised that there should be no rush to the new Land Courts, that only certain test cases should be submitted under the direction of the Land League. A rush to the Courts, he thought, would mean imperfect consideration of cases and small

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* Hansard, cclxii.-cclxv. ; T. P. O'Connor's *Parnell Movement*, pp. 229-30.

<sup>2</sup> Reid's *Forster*, ii. 323-4.

<sup>3</sup> Hansard, cclxv. 252.

<sup>4</sup> Reid's *Forster*, ii. 334-7.



reductions. This advice was accepted by the Convention.<sup>1</sup> Both Forster and Gladstone became angry. Forster had long entertained something like personal animosity towards Parnell; Gladstone believed him to be mischievously interfering, standing between the living and the dead, "not, like Aaron, to stay but to spread the plague"; and in this same speech he told him in menacing tones that the resources of civilization were not yet exhausted.<sup>2</sup> This speech was delivered at Leeds on the 7th of October, and on the 10th of the same month Parnell replied to it at Wexford. He defied Gladstone to trample on the rights of the Irish nation, with no moral force behind him, and in language of scorn and passion described him as a masquerading knight-errant ready to champion every nation but Ireland.<sup>3</sup> Three days later Parnell was lodged in Kilmainham Prison; and when Gladstone announced the fact at a public meeting in London, his audience sprang to their feet and cheered "as if it had been the news of a signal victory gained by England over a hated and formidable enemy."<sup>4</sup> Dillon, Sexton, and O'Kelly, M.P.'s, were also lodged in Kilmainham. They struck back by issuing a manifesto advising the people to pay no rent. But the manifesto was assailed by Dr. Croke, Archbishop of Cashel, one of the greatest friends of the League, and it was disavowed by the priests, and in reality fell flat. A week later, Forster, on his own responsibility, declared the Land League an unlawful association, the meetings of which would be forcibly suppressed. The same day the Land Courts were first opened and were thronged with tenants seeking a judicial rent. For the moment the popular movement was submerged. Forster was triumphant, and Parnell was impotent behind prison bars.<sup>5</sup>

Just at this date a noted figure passed away in the person of John MacHale, Archbishop of Tuam. He died in November, being then ninety years old. As a public man he had partly outlived his fame, and his condemnation of the Land League in its earlier stages was a shock to many. In his old age he was given as his coadjutor a prelate whom he disliked, and

<sup>1</sup> O'Brien's *Parnell*, i. 305-6.

<sup>2</sup> *Annual Register*, p. 213; Reid, ii. 352.

<sup>3</sup> O'Brien's *Parnell*, i. 308-13.

<sup>4</sup> Reid, ii. 355-6.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* 357-9.

against whose appointment he publicly protested, and these things embittered his last days.

Had he lived a few months longer he would have seen stirring times. Coercion was uncontrolled. Forster, given a free hand, was as absolute as the Czar of Russia. Police, military, magistrates, law officers were at his command. And he was not sparing in the use of his power. He filled the jails. He dispersed League meetings, raided League offices, confiscated League property, prohibited the sale and circulation of the League organ, *United Ireland*. Six special magistrates with extraordinary powers were each given a district, and each with authority to do just what he pleased. They arrested, they prosecuted, they imprisoned, aided the evictor, batoned and bludgeoned the people, and a County Inspector issued a circular to the police authorizing them to shoot at sight any one whom they suspected of an intention to commit murder.<sup>1</sup> And yet Ireland was not pacified. In place of the suppressed Land League a Ladies' Land League was formed. It was attacked by Cardinal M'Cabe, Archbishop of Dublin, but vigorously defended by Dr. Croke. These ladies carried on the work of their imprisoned brothers, and in most cases were indeed far more violent of speech. A few were imprisoned, but even Mr. Forster shrank from the wholesale imprisonment of women, and the Ladies' Land League continued their work. *United Ireland* was circulated in spite of magistrates and police. Men imprisoned had their crops saved by friendly neighbours, and were elected to representative positions by popular votes. And Mr. Parnell and Mr. Dillon were voted the freedom of Dublin, Cork and other cities. Nor were outrages lessened, but increased. Parnell had predicted that his place would be taken by Captain Moonlight. Forster feared that secret societies would become active. Both expectations were realized. In the darkness of night bands of Moonlighters went abroad, fired into houses, terrorized landlords, bailiffs and grabbers, houghed their cattle, wounded or perhaps murdered themselves. In November Forster thought that the best thing for Ireland

<sup>1</sup> T. P. O'Connor, p. 246.



and himself would be his replacement by some one "not tarred by the Coercion brush," and as the old year went out his modest wish was that the new year might be a less bad year than the last.<sup>1</sup> He had, indeed, no reason to be sanguine. For in 1881 the number of agrarian outrages was the highest since 1879.<sup>2</sup> In the first quarter of 1881 there was one murder; in the first quarter of 1882 there were six; and for March 1882 the number of agrarian outrages was greater than for the preceding month of October, when the Land League was suppressed. Lord Cowper sorrowfully admitted that the police had led the Government astray, and that when they said they knew the planners of outrages they had been mistaken.<sup>3</sup>

One last effort Forster made to retrieve his already damaged reputation, and in March 1882 he went through the disturbed districts of Limerick, Clare and Galway; and in such stormy centres as Tulla and Athenry appealed in person to the people. Let them cease to countenance outrages and the prison doors would be soon thrown open. But the people listened to him with impatience; and while their trusted leaders were in prison and their liberties trampled under foot, they were not to be cajoled.<sup>4</sup> Mr. Gladstone made a personal appeal to Cardinal Newman, asking him to use his influence with the Pope so that pressure might be brought to bear on the Irish priests. The Premier evidently thought it useless to appeal to the Irish bishops. The spectacle was indeed a strange one to see the author of *Vaticanism* thus appealing for aid to the Pope. But Cardinal Newman replied somewhat coldly that while the Pope could do everything on a question of faith or morals, his intervention could do little on a purely political question.<sup>5</sup> What, then, was to be done? Forster's remedy was more drastic coercion, more prosecutions, more imprisonments, more military and police, more magistrates like Clifford Lloyd.<sup>6</sup> But it was quite plain that coercion had failed, and it was certainly not plain that more coercion would succeed. Besides, even England

<sup>1</sup> Reid's *Forster*, ii. 364-71, 380.

<sup>3</sup> O'Brien's *Parnell*, i. 330.

<sup>5</sup> Morley's *Gladstone*, ii. 302-3.

<sup>2</sup> *Annual Register*, p. 1882.

<sup>4</sup> Reid, ii. 390-406.

<sup>6</sup> Reid, ii. 415-20.

was getting tired of Forster. Englishmen respect law and do not like coercion, which is the negation of ordinary law, and, above all, they did not like coercion which was a failure. The section among the Liberals which always opposed coercion gained new adherents, and in the Press and on platforms Forster was assailed from his own side. He was assailed also by prominent Tories who condemned the continued imprisonment of so many prominent men, and who expressed their readiness to outbid the Liberals on the Land question by voting for peasant proprietary. It seemed as if the Tories were to be the champions of freedom and the Liberals the champions of repression.<sup>1</sup>

Just then (in April) Parnell was liberated on parole to attend his nephew's funeral at Paris. Passing through London, he saw Mr. MacCarthy and Captain O'Shea, the latter a Whig Home Ruler; and through these he intimated to Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Chamberlain, that if the arrears question was settled by Government he and his friends would withdraw the No-rent Manifesto, and gradually slow down the agitation. The offer was eagerly accepted. Gladstone and Chamberlain, in opposition to Forster, obtained the support of the Cabinet; Parnell, Dillon, O'Kelly and Davitt were liberated; and Forster and Cowper resigned, and were replaced by Lord Spencer and Lord Frederick Cavendish. This was the result of what came to be called the Kilmainham Treaty.<sup>2</sup> The transformation was indeed complete. Coercion was in the dust, the prisoners free, the harassed tenant to be relieved from the burden of arrears, while the whole nation burst into a shout of joy. Nor was there any suspicion that the cloudless sky was so soon to be darkened by the wicked work of the assassin.

<sup>1</sup> Reid, ii. 383-5; O'Brien's *Parnell*, i. 332-4.

<sup>2</sup> Reid, ii. 425-54; O'Brien's *Parnell*, i. 336-49.



## CHAPTER XIII

### *The Coercionist Régime*

MANY Fenians like Davitt joined the Land League when it was formed. Many others refused to do so, having no faith in constitutional agitation. These were not necessarily in favour of violence or outrage, and only hoped for an opportunity to join in some open war against England. A third class were those with objects, half agrarian, half national, who believed that any weapon might be used in fighting the Government or the landlords. In secret conspiracy, in violence, in murder if necessary, they put their faith. In the country districts they swelled the ranks of the Moonlighters. In Dublin there was a special Secret Society called the Invincibles. Of national, or even agrarian, objects they appear to have had no definite idea. Their ambition was "to make history" by murdering those who tyrannized over Ireland, and of these Forster, the Chief Secretary, and Mr. Burke, the Under Secretary, were the chief. The latter was an old official with landlord proclivities, a strong man who ruled Forster as well as Ireland. But the plans of the Invincibles often miscarried, and so frequent and so marvellous were the escapes of Forster that it seemed as if Providence itself had intervened on his behalf.<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Burke was less fortunate. On the 6th of May the new Viceroy, Lord Spencer, and the new Chief Secretary, Lord Frederick Cavendish, entered Dublin in state; and when the State ceremonies were over and evening had come, both, as well as Mr. Burke, made their way to the Phoenix Park. Lord Cavendish was specially unfortunate. Had he accepted Lord Spencer's invitation to drive with him, he would have escaped

<sup>1</sup> Reid, ii. 466-9.

the doom which overtook him. Had Lord Spencer not taken an unusual route to the Park, he would have passed where the subsequent tragedy took place, and have prevented it. Finally, had Lord Cavendish not been with Burke, no harm would have befallen him ; for, when the whole ghastly tale was unfolded, it appeared that it was Burke the assassins wanted, and that they did not even know who Cavendish was. At seven in the evening, in sight of the Viceregal Lodge, in the full light of day, both Burke and Cavendish were set upon and cut to pieces with knives.<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Davitt has vividly described what followed. On the 6th of May Parnell, Dillon and O'Kelly, M.P.'s, went from London to Portland Prison, and Davitt, once more free, returned with them to London. He noted that Parnell was specially jubilant. Forster was beaten and disgraced. Gladstone had abandoned Coercion, and was to legislate on the Arrears question ; even the Tories had declared for land purchase. "We are on the eve," he said, "of something like Home Rule." He was specially pleased with Lord Frederick Cavendish, "one of the most modest men in the House, and a thorough supporter of the new policy." Just as the reunited friends were spending a pleasant evening in the Westminster Palace Hotel, a telegram was handed in announcing that the Chief Secretary and Under Secretary had been murdered in the Phoenix Park, and that the assassins had escaped. Stunned by the blow, Parnell wished to retire from public life ; there was no use, he thought, asking the country to make such sacrifices as it had been making if assassins were thus to undo all that had been done. He called on Sir Charles Dilke, who noted that he was "pale, careworn, altogether unstrung." Parnell proposed to Gladstone to retire from public life altogether ; but Gladstone disapproved, thinking that if Parnell went, no restraining influence would remain in Ireland, and no repressive act would avail to put down outrages.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Annual Register*, p. 1882 ; O'Brien's *Parnell*, i. 353-5.

<sup>2</sup> Davitt, pp. 355-9 ; Morley's *Gladstone*, ii. 307-10 ; O'Brien's *Parnell*, i. 353-8.



A manifesto was then issued by Parnell, Davitt and Dillon deploring the murder as the worst that had stained the annals of Ireland for fifty years, and declaring that nothing could wipe away the stain but bringing the assassins to justice. All over Ireland, and among the Irish abroad, the same feeling was shown. There was not so much sympathy with Burke, so long the enemy of Irish popular movements; but shame was felt that a kind-hearted English gentleman, who had come as the messenger of peace, should be thus wantonly and wickedly struck down.

In England there was no serious effort made to connect Parnell or the Land League with the murders. And if Gladstone had had his way the milder and wiser policy of reconciliation and peace would have been continued. But it was impossible in face of enraged public opinion in England. In some places Irishmen were assailed simply because they were Irish; in many places they were dismissed from their employments. It was felt that a determined effort should be made to put down the Irish secret societies, and that until this was done neither England nor Ireland could be at peace. This was the state of things when the House of Commons met on the 8th of May. Only four days before Parnell was the victor of the hour. Gladstone, his assailant of October 1881, was now his friend and even champion; Forster was discredited and disgraced, a failure in the eyes of the whole Empire. The latter was speaking when Parnell, fresh from Kilmainham, entered the House and was received by his followers with rapturous cheers. Bitterly Forster assailed him and the Government which had entered into any arrangement with him. Going back to the days of Henry VII., he likened Parnell to the great Earl of Kildare whom all Ireland could not rule, and who in consequence was charged to rule Ireland by the King. "In like manner if all England cannot govern the hon. member for Cork, let us acknowledge that he is the greatest power in Ireland to-day."<sup>1</sup> It was the hour of Parnell's triumph and of Forster's defeat.

<sup>1</sup> Hansard, cclxix.

The Phoenix Park murder effected a disastrous change, and on the 8th of May Parnell appeared in the House of Commons, careworn and depressed. With unwonted feeling he lamented the murders, begging the Government not to again turn to coercion. But the Government was in reality unable to resist the tide of English rage. There was a howl for repressive laws, and on the 11th of May Sir William Harcourt introduced the Crimes Bill, the most drastic Coercion Bill brought into Parliament for half a century.<sup>1</sup> For murder, treason, attacking dwelling-houses, crimes of aggravated violence, trial by jury was to give way to trial by a Commission of Judges. In proclaimed districts the police might make domiciliary visits either by night or day, and arrest those out after dark. Newspapers could be seized, meetings proclaimed and dispersed. The summary jurisdiction of magistrates was enormously increased. Finally, Courts of Secret Inquiry could be set up, recalling the Star-Chamber Courts of Charles I. The Act was to last for three years.<sup>2</sup> Hampered by the state of public opinion in Parliament and outside, the Irish members had no chance of defeating the measure, yet they fought it with vigour and persistence. But when the whole party were suspended, some of them even being absent at the time, further resistance was seen to be useless. They withdrew, protesting against their treatment, and throwing upon the Government the whole responsibility for a "Bill which has been urged through the House by a course of violence and subterfuge, and which, when passed into law, will be devoid of moral force, and will be no constitutional Act of Parliament." The Crimes Bill rapidly passed through its remaining stages, and soon received the Royal Assent.<sup>3</sup>

At the same time the Government introduced an Arrears Bill which also passed into law. It applied only to tenants under £30, and to those who could satisfy a legal tribunal that they were unable to pay all the arrears of rent they owed. In such cases, if they paid the rent for 1881 and one year of the

<sup>1</sup> O'Brien's *Parnell*, i. 358-9.

<sup>2</sup> *Annual Register*, p. 65.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 78-88, 94-110.



arrears due, the State, out of the Church Surplus Fund, paid another year of the arrears, and the remainder was wiped out. Thus did the Government carry out its side of the Kilmainham Treaty. Mr. Parnell on his side suppressed the Ladies' Land League by refusing to give additional funds. He refused to countenance Davitt's scheme of land nationalization. And, in opposition to Dillon, he expressed his determination to "slow down the agitation." Tired of violence, he wanted the country to settle down to a moderate and purely constitutional movement.<sup>1</sup>

But the militant spirits among the popular leaders wanted to resist the evictors and the Crimes Act by a militant association such as the Land League, and under pressure from these Parnell's hands were forced. A National Conference was then held in Dublin on the 17th of October, and the Irish National League was formed. The chief planks in its programme were Home Rule, peasant proprietary, local self-government, the extension of the franchise, the encouragement of Irish labour and industrial interests. Modelled on the Land League, the National League had Mr. Parnell as its President, had its central committee and central offices in Dublin, and branches throughout the land. And in turn it extended to England and America, and even to Australia. The League had also its official press organ—*United Ireland*—edited by one of the ablest of journalists, Mr. William O'Brien.<sup>2</sup>

Meanwhile, in addition to the Phoenix Park murders, many other murders have to be recorded for the year 1882. Early in the year the Huddys, Lord Ardilaun's bailiffs, were murdered, and their bodies thrown into Lough Mask, and an informer named Bailey was murdered in the streets of Dublin. In April a Mr. Smyth of Westmeath was shot dead. In June Mr. Walter Burke and his military escort were shot dead in the county of Galway, and in the same county and month Lord Clanricarde's agent was also murdered; nor was any one ever brought to justice for these crimes.<sup>3</sup> But the most

<sup>1</sup> O'Brien's *Parnell*, i. 364-6.

<sup>2</sup> Davitt's *Fall of Feudalism*, pp. 368-79.

<sup>3</sup> *Annual Register*, pp. 183-4, 192.

atrocious of all these murders was that of the Joyces of Maamtrasna, in the remote district of Joyce country on the borders of Mayo and Galway. This murder took place in August. Suspected of knowing all about the murder of the Huddys and of being likely to tell what they knew, the whole Joyce family were attacked by a band of armed and disguised men, and Joyce, his mother, wife, son and daughter were cruelly murdered. Another son was left for dead, but as if by a miracle survived.<sup>1</sup> In November Judge Lawson was attacked in the streets of Dublin, as was a Mr. Field and some detectives, one of the detectives being killed.<sup>2</sup> For the whole year the number of murders was twenty-six, the total number of agrarian outrages of all kinds being higher than for the two preceding years taken together.<sup>3</sup>

With the new year came quieter times, and when Parliament met in February, the Queen's Speech noted with pleasure that there was an improvement in the social condition of Ireland, that agrarian crimes had diminished, and that the laws had been everywhere upheld.<sup>4</sup> The Chief Secretary at that date was Mr. George Trevelyan, but the real ruler of Ireland was Lord Spencer, who, unlike Mr. Trevelyan, had a seat in the Cabinet. He was a strong man, of great courage and resolution, and under his directions the Crimes Act was rigorously enforced. Planners of outrages were perseveringly tracked and severely punished, meetings were proclaimed, newspapers suppressed, police and magistrates urged on to do their duty. And as if the Crimes Act were not enough, an old statute of Edward III. was dug up from mediæval times. Under its provisions Mr. Davitt and Mr. Healy were prosecuted for speeches they made. They might have escaped imprisonment had they given bail; but they refused, and were sentenced to six months' imprisonment. Mr. Biggar was also prosecuted for having attacked Lord Spencer in one of his speeches, but the prosecution was dropped. And a prosecution of William

<sup>1</sup> *Annual Register*, p. 194.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 197.

<sup>3</sup> O'Brien's *Parnell*, i. 373.

<sup>4</sup> *Annual Register*, pp. 13-14.



O'Brien for some seditious writing in *United Ireland* only resulted in a disagreement of the jury.<sup>1</sup>

An attempt was also made to damage Mr. Parnell. In February the Phoenix Park murderers were put on trial. Millions of men strained their ears to listen to the evidence, which was indeed startling enough, especially when the most prominent of the Invincibles, Mr. Carey, turned informer. As a result of his evidence five men were hanged, two sentenced to penal servitude for life, and several others to various periods of imprisonment. Carey himself was pardoned, but a few months later was shot dead by an Invincible agent on board a steamer bound for Capetown. "One result of the trials," says the *Annual Register*, "was to fully justify the Government in any action which had resulted in the substitution of a new Chief Secretary for Mr. Forster. . . . It reads like the grimmest of satires upon his term of office to know that at a time when the jails were choking with the number of Mr. Forster's suspects; when according to his own belief he had every dangerous man in the island under lock and key, his own life was in incessant danger at the hands of men of whose existence he was guilelessly unaware."<sup>2</sup>

All this, no doubt, only deepened Mr. Forster's animosity towards Parnell and towards Ireland, and when it appeared from the evidence that Carey had been on friendly terms with some Irish members, and that the assassins' knives had been for a short time deposited at the National League Office in London, the ex-Chief Secretary turned upon Mr. Parnell in the House of Commons. He did not indeed charge him with encouraging murder, but he did charge him with not having condemned it, or used his influence to put murder down. And he charged generally that crime had dogged the footsteps of the League. In a crowded House, crowded in every part, with the Prince of Wales and Cardinal Manning in the galleries, Mr. Parnell rose to reply. But he disdained to be judged by the House of Commons or by English public opinion. He was

<sup>1</sup> O'Brien's *Parnell*, ii. 1-2; *Annual Register*, pp. 189-92.

<sup>2</sup> P. 197.

responsible only to the Irish people, who alone had a right to judge him. As for Forster, he treated him with scorn as a discredited politician who had forfeited all claim to sit in judgment on any sensible or serious public man. He suggested, indeed, that while the Crimes Act was being enforced Forster ought to be in Ireland to aid Lord Spencer in sending men to the gallows, in holding secret inquiries, in wringing taxes from a starving peasantry to pay for outrages which they had not committed and with which they did not sympathize.<sup>1</sup>

In England this reply was considered unsatisfactory, but in Ireland it only augmented Mr. Parnell's power. In January Mr. O'Brien was returned M.P. for Mallow, his opponent being Mr. Nash, the new Solicitor-General, whom he defeated by nearly two to one. In July Mr. Healy, lately imprisoned, was returned triumphantly for the county of Monaghan, hitherto a Whig stronghold. And a series of successful Nationalist meetings were then held throughout Ulster in spite of Orange threats and Orange revolvers.<sup>2</sup> Finally, Mr. Parnell got a National testimonial. It had been set on foot to pay off a mortgage of £13,000 on his property. An Irish Whig Catholic M.P., Mr. Errington, then at Rome with credentials from the British Foreign Office, did what damage he could against Parnell and his friends, with the result that a Papal Rescript was issued condemning the Parnell testimonial. The Pope had little sympathy with Irish popular movements and was anxious to be friendly with England, which, after all, was eminently fair to Catholics throughout the world. Hence the Rescript. It did not, however, injure but rather served the Parnell testimonial, and when the lists closed in the end of 1883, the large sum of £37,000 had been subscribed.<sup>3</sup>

All that year and during the next Mr. Parnell's position was one of difficulty. Lord Spencer's rigorous enforcement of Coercion rendered it hazardous to hold meetings or make strong speeches. Mr. Parnell left the fight in Ireland to his lieutenants, notably to Mr. O'Brien, who, with a courage and determination equal to Lord Spencer's own, struck back at the

<sup>1</sup> *Annual Register*, pp. 38-48.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 203-4, 206-7.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 207-8.



forces of Coercion. Every illegality committed, every encroachment on popular rights was mercilessly exposed in *United Ireland*, and in 1884 Mr. O'Brien was able to have several prominent officials convicted of hideous and unnatural crimes, with consequent loss of prestige to the Government to which they belonged. In America the National League was largely in the hands of revolutionists, and while Parnell himself was not a member of the Clan-na-Gael, the fact that he was associated with them told against him in England. Lastly, new and drastic rules of Parliamentary procedure adopted in the autumn session of 1882 seriously hampered his power in Parliament, for these rules applied to the whole field of Parliamentary action, and while materially augmenting the powers of the Speaker and Chairman of Committee, correspondingly curtailed the rights of private members and of minorities.<sup>1</sup>

Yet it was certain that as time passed Mr. Parnell's power and influence were increasing, and that the Liberal Coercionist Government was growing weaker. The meetings held in Ulster, following the Monaghan election, did something to weaken the power of landlord ascendancy and Orange bigotry, and were a suitable and useful preparation for the Nationalist victories subsequently won.<sup>2</sup> The Irish leader had indeed his troubles with the American extremists, and he was specially wroth with those who organized dynamite outrages in England. Nevertheless he kept the extremists on his side, because he had no regard for English opinion, and refused, at the bidding of Englishmen, to condemn those who preferred to love Ireland, no matter how mischievous might be their policy or how cruel or criminal their methods.<sup>3</sup> The priests he kept with him because, in spite of the fact that revolutionists were aiding him, the priests knew that he was no revolutionist himself but a constitutional leader. And they liked him all the better because English intrigue was so busy against him in Rome, English intrigue being also busy against themselves.<sup>4</sup> There were a

<sup>1</sup> *Annual Register*, 1882, pp. 26-29, 36-40.

<sup>2</sup> O'Brien's *Parnell*, ii. 21-22.

<sup>3</sup> *Annual Register*, 1885, pp. 17-18

<sup>4</sup> O'Brien's *Parnell*, ii. 23-27.

few English Liberals too, men like Mr. Cowen and Mr. Labouchere, who helped Parnell. They hated Coercion, and were disgusted at what was being done in Ireland under a Liberal Government, and in their disgust they cast aside party allegiance for the sake of popular rights, and frequently voted with the Parnellites.

The Government policy in Egypt was still more disastrous to the Liberals. The defeats of Hicks Pasha and General Baker (February 1884), and the vacillation and indecision which led to the appointment, and finally to the sacrifice of General Gordon, supplied the Tories with a favourite and popular subject of attack. In these attacks both Parnellites and Tories fought side by side, their common object being to defeat the Liberal Government. And in 1884 they nearly succeeded. The vote of censure in February was only defeated by a majority of 19 in a House of more than 600 members; and three months later the Government majority was but 28, when a further vote of censure was moved.<sup>1</sup>

With one small section of the Tories the relations of the Parnellites were especially cordial. This was the Fourth Party, consisting of only four members—Lord R. Churchill, Mr. A. J. Balfour, Mr. Gorst and Sir H. Wolff—all men of first-class ability. They had no separate party organization and no elected leader, though Lord R. Churchill generally obtained recognition as such. He was one of the most fascinating figures in English public life—bold, outspoken, fearless; a hater of shams; an aristocrat with popular sympathies; a Tory by family ties and traditions, but much more of a Liberal than many of the Liberals themselves. He called himself a Tory Democrat. He disapproved of the old Tory programme consisting of Coercion for Ireland and foreign war; despised the accepted Tory leaders, whom he irreverently called the “old gang,” and wanted men who would bring themselves in touch with popular needs and compete with their Liberal opponents for popular support.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Annual Register*, 1884, pp. 33-44, 65-70.

<sup>2</sup> *Churchill's Life*, i. 234-5, 296-301.



Disliking Coercion, he supported Forster's Coercion Bill of 1881 "with reluctance and disgust," and he frequently and vigorously attacked what he considered Forster's abuse of Coercion.<sup>1</sup> The favour he thus attained in the eyes of the Parnellites was further augmented by his supporting the demand in 1884 of an inquiry into the case of the Maamtrasna murderers. One of the four men executed was declared to be innocent by the remaining three, and he vehemently declared his own innocence on the scaffold. For arraigning the Government for its conduct in the matter, Mr. O'Brien had been prosecuted in January 1883. But the voice of protest and complaint was only silenced for a time, and in the summer of 1884 one of the informers, a man named Casey, told the Archbishop of Tuam, Dr. MacEvilly, that Myles Joyce was innocent, and that his own evidence accusing Joyce had been wrung from him under a threat to have his life sacrificed if he did not swear away the life of poor Joyce. Dr. MacEvilly, who then demanded an inquiry, had special claims on the Government. The son of a farmer, he had no popular sympathies, and had opposed the Land League and National League, and disliked priests who were members of either organization. With less culture than Dr. Troy, he was an equally strong supporter of the Government, and had got offices for some of his friends. And yet Lord Spencer would not accede to his request and have the Maamtrasna case reopened. When it was brought in the autumn session before Parliament, Lord R. Churchill supported the Parnellites and voted with them in the minority.<sup>2</sup>

He also supported them when the Franchise Bill was introduced establishing household suffrage throughout the United Kingdom. Some of the less advanced of the Liberals would have been glad to leave Ireland out. But Mr. Gladstone would not create a fresh Irish grievance, and Mr. Trevelyan, the Chief Secretary, would instantly resign office if the Bill were not extended to Ireland. The great majority of the Tories disliked the measure for any portion of the United

<sup>1</sup> *Churchill's Life*, i. 201, 209.

<sup>2</sup> *Annual Register*, pp. 236-7.

Kingdom, and at first it was thrown out in the House of Lords. And it only passed when the Liberals consented to introduce at once a Redistribution of Seats Bill. With no respect for party traditions or party discipline, Lord R. Churchill supported the Franchise Bill, even when unaccompanied by a Redistribution Bill. He supported its second reading in opposition to the nominal Tory leader, Sir Stafford Northcote. He opposed Mr. Broderick's amendment excepting Ireland. And when Mr. W. H. Smith, another Tory M.P., a successful shopkeeper who had acquired wealth by selling books, sneered at Irish poverty and proposed the giving of votes to Irish mud-cabins, Lord R. Churchill vigorously assailed him, and very effectually disposed of the mud-cabin argument.<sup>1</sup>

This was the state of things early in 1885. The Franchise Bill was then law, and household suffrage had been extended to Ireland. The Redistribution Bill had also become law, leaving, in spite of many protests from English members, the number of Irish seats undiminished. The Crimes Act would expire in August, and Irish members wanted to know if it was to be renewed. On the Franchise and Redistribution Bills they had acted with the Liberals. But if the Crimes Act was to be renewed, all the indications were that Lord Randolph Churchill and Mr. Parnell would unite their strength with the other enemies of the Government and perhaps hurl Mr. Gladstone from power.

Lord R. Churchill's influence was then considerable. He commanded the attention and attracted the support of the masses as no other Tory did ; and his popularity in the country had its effect in Parliament. The older and more staid of the party regarded him with suspicion and distrust ; but the more militant and aggressive, the young men who looked to the future with confidence, men with initiative and ambition were ready to follow where he led. And in any arrangements for the future which the Tory leaders might make, these young men and their brilliant leader could not be ignored. Mr. Parnell on his side, in his own party and in his own country, was supreme. No one dared oppose his nominee at elections ;

<sup>1</sup> *Annual Register*, p. 125 ; *Churchill's Life*, i. 344-6.



and with the extension of the franchise it was well known that his strength in Parliament would be enormously increased. Of late years his attendance in the House of Commons had been irregular and intermittent. But the Irish Party work had nevertheless been well done, for the party numbered among its members men who would have made their mark in any deliberative assembly; men in many respects far abler than Mr. Parnell himself. In 1885 Mr. Sexton's great powers were matured. He was then recognized as the greatest orator in Parliament after Mr. Gladstone; a ready and powerful debater, an expert in finance and figures, with unlimited capacity for Parliamentary work. The reputation earned by Mr. Healy on the Land Act of 1881 had since been maintained and increased. He had been called to the Bar and had already acquired a large practice. But he managed somehow to attend on all important occasions in Parliament, and always intervened with advantage in debate. He had enormous capacity for work, mastered details with extraordinary swiftness, and in the usually dull routine work of drafting clauses and amending Bills he never tired. In debate he seized at once on the weak points in his opponent's case; his readiness of reply was remarkable; and the antagonist who provoked him received a scathing chastisement not easily forgotten. Mr. Arthur O'Connor was cool, clear, unimpassioned, always master of his subject, a most dangerous man to attack. Mr. T. P. O'Connor was more brilliant, effective as a writer as well as a speaker, indeed one of the readiest and most effective speakers in Parliament. Mr. William O'Brien shone brightest as a militant and fearless journalist; but he had the gift of oratory greater perhaps than any of his colleagues, and on the platform could sway an Irish crowd as he willed. There were others in the Irish ranks less generously endowed than these, yet capable of doing useful work either in Parliament or outside it. All were eager as Mr. Parnell was to make an end of the Liberal Government. Nor was anything required but a suitable opportunity to have Irish and Tory coalesce.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Parnell Movement.*

The opportunity soon came. The reckless extravagance of an Egyptian Khedive had so involved Egypt in financial difficulties that her foreign creditors had been compelled to interfere in her internal affairs. England, being the most deeply concerned, undertook to organize the Egyptian army, to superintend the administration of justice, to watch over the raising and spending of the taxes. But Mr. Gladstone's Government had no desire that England should remain in permanent occupation of the country, still less to extend or maintain Egyptian influence in the Soudan. Their anxiety was to restore order and tranquillity to Egypt, and have that country confine its efforts to its own territory ; and for this purpose General Gordon was despatched in January 1884 to Khartoum. His instructions when leaving England were to take back to Egypt the Egyptian garrisons at Khartoum and in other Soudanese towns, leaving the Soudan to work out its own salvation as best it could. Urgency was necessary, for the Mahdi, claiming to have a religious mission, had placed himself at the head of the whole strength of Moslem fanaticism, and Khartoum was seriously threatened by him. Gordon was an able man, but a bad selection for such a mission. He was a man of imagination, of impulse, of religious zeal, a crusader better suited for the days of Richard Cœur de Lion than for the nineteenth century. Disobeying his orders, he remained at Khartoum instead of evacuating it ; prepared to "smash the Mahdi" instead of leaving the Soudan to its fate ; waited at Khartoum till the waves of Moslem fury were already beating against its walls, and then he could only appeal to England for relief. A relieving expedition was sent, tardily and with reluctance indeed, but when Khartoum was sighted it was already in the Mahdi's hands, and Gordon was slain.<sup>1</sup>

The Tories were not slow to take advantage of this calamity. Gordon, half saint, half mystic, had become a national hero. His absolute unselfishness, his splendid courage, his contempt of danger which would have appalled other men, his confidence in God and ceaseless walking in the presence of

<sup>1</sup> *Life of Granville*, ii. 381-402.



the Unseen, had captivated the popular imagination; and when it was found that Khartoum had fallen and that Gordon had perished, the tempest of the people's wrath was turned against the Government. Their irresolution, their change of purpose, their tardiness of preparation, their want of vigour were all fiercely and passionately condemned. Even the Queen did not hesitate to criticize and to condemn; and when (in February) the Tories proposed a vote of censure, it was defeated only by 14 votes. The Parnellites voted with the Tories; they cared nothing for Egypt and nothing for the Soudan. But Ireland was still under the Crimes Act, and it was said that the Crimes Act was about to be renewed. On the other hand, Lord R. Churchill had assured Mr. Parnell that the Tories would have nothing to do with Coercion, and if they had he would oppose them. For this reason both Tories and Parnellites went into the lobby against the Government.<sup>1</sup> Three months later they again assailed the Ministry on the Consolidated Fund Bill, but again they were defeated, this time by a majority of 30 votes.<sup>2</sup>

In June the attack was renewed, and on this occasion—it was the 8th of June—the combination of Tories and Parnellites brought down their great opponent, Mr. Gladstone. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Childers, in his budget for the year had increased the duty on spirits and beer. From the Tory side, Sir Michael Hicks-Beach proposed an amendment, which was a direct negative, and Mr. Gladstone declared that by the vote to be given the Government would stand or fall. In the previous month Lord Carlingford, on the part of the Ministry, stated in the House of Lords that it was proposed to renew the Crimes Act.<sup>3</sup> This finally determined the Parnellites to throw in their lot with the Tories. The consequence was that on the amendment of Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, Mr. Parnell and all his followers went into the Tory lobby, and the Liberals were beaten by 12 votes, 264 being in the majority and 252 on the other side.<sup>4</sup> There was the

<sup>1</sup> *Annual Register*, pp. 29-36.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 568.

<sup>2</sup> Hansard, ccxcviii. 274.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* 1421-1511.

wildest jubilation among the victors. Lord R. Churchill was especially demonstrative, and, jumping on his seat, waved his hat and cheered wildly like a schoolboy at play. Mr. Gladstone at once resigned, and after a short interval Lord Salisbury became Prime Minister; Lord R. Churchill, Secretary for India; and Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, Chancellor of the Exchequer and Leader of the House of Commons. Thus fell the Liberal Government, which had employed Forster and sustained Lord Spencer, which had suppressed free speech in Ireland, imprisoned without trial, and sent not a few innocent Irishmen to the dungeon and to the scaffold. And the Irish members of Parliament were specially pleased that it was *their* votes which had given the Coercionist Government its death-blow.



## CHAPTER XIV

### *Gladstone and Home Rule*

THE substitution of a Tory for a Liberal Government suited Mr. Parnell well. Lord Randolph Churchill was his friend and the enemy of Coercion, and it soon appeared that the Irish policy of the young Lord had the approval of his colleagues. In the House of Lords the Viceroy, Lord Carnarvon, defined, with the authority of the Premier, the attitude of the Government towards Ireland. Deprecating Coercion except to meet exceptional agrarian crime, he noted that there was no such exceptional crime then. There was therefore no need to renew the Crimes Act even in part. He preferred to trust the Irish people, and believed that his trust in them would not be misplaced.<sup>1</sup> When he went to Ireland he walked the streets of Dublin unaccompanied by a single policeman, in striking contrast to Lord Spencer, who never went abroad without a strong armed escort. The Government also granted an inquiry into the case of those convicted for the Maamtrasna murders.<sup>2</sup> It was nothing more than a fresh review of the evidence of the Lord-Lieutenant, and resulted in an approval of the verdict given by the jury. But even this inquiry gave satisfaction in Ireland, and was fiercely assailed in the House of Commons by the late Liberal Home Secretary, Sir William Harcourt. Lord Randolph Churchill replied to him in language of scathing severity. He contrasted the calm tone and temper shown by Mr. Parnell, who had demanded the inquiry, with the language of vehemence and passion used by the Liberal spokesman; repudiated the notion that the Tory Government assumed

<sup>1</sup> Hansard, ccxcviii. 1658-62.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* ccxcix. 1065-1150.

responsibility for the blunders of their predecessors ; and declared that for himself he had no confidence in Lord Spencer and no approval for his Irish administration.

The delighted Parnellites received this speech with enthusiasm, and were well satisfied with Lord Carnarvon. And their satisfaction was all the greater because the Tory Government were just then engaged in passing a Land Purchase Act for Ireland. Introduced into the House of Lords by the Irish Lord Chancellor, Lord Ashbourne, it came to be called the Ashbourne Act, and provided a sum of £5,000,000 for advances to tenants who wished to purchase their holdings. For the first time the whole of the purchase money was granted, to be paid back—interest and principal—at 4 per cent within a period of forty-nine years.<sup>1</sup> With the approval of Liberals and Tories, the Bill rapidly passed through its several stages, and proved to be a real boon to Ireland, the pioneer of many other Land Purchase Acts.

Shortly after its passage in the middle of August, the last session of the Parliament elected in 1880 came to an end. By an arrangement between the Liberal and Tory leaders, the dissolution was fixed for the following November. The Tory Government, indeed, was spoken of as a Government of caretakers, merely holding office till the result of the pending General Election was known. What that result might be largely depended on Mr. Parnell, and politicians of all shades watched him keenly. The Irish voters in Great Britain were organized, and in many cases could turn the scale between Liberal and Tory at the polls. They would be guided by Parnell, and there were certainly strong reasons why he should advise them to vote with the Tories. Under the influence of Lord Churchill they had dropped Coercion and passed a Land Purchase Act, and they might go much further under the same influence. But there was more than this. In the end of July, Lord Carnarvon and Mr. Parnell met in private and exchanged views about Home Rule. The controversy which subsequently arose disclosed some points of difference between

<sup>1</sup> Hansard, ccxcix. 1040-49.



the parties to the interview as to what passed between them. But there could be and was no denial of the fact that Lord Carnarvon sought an interview with Mr. Justin MacCarthy, to whom he declared that he was in favour of Home Rule for Ireland on Colonial lines, though he believed he would have some difficulty in getting the members of the Cabinet to agree with him. It is of little importance that in his subsequent interview with Mr. Parnell, in an untenanted house in London, he made it clear that he spoke only for himself and was entering into no treaty or bargain. He did not and could not say that he was authorized by the Ministry to promise Home Rule; but he was the Irish Viceroy, and not likely to hold such an interview without some authority; and in point of fact he did consult Lord Salisbury beforehand, and reported to him the result of the interview. Nor was there any material difference between Lord Carnarvon and Mr. Parnell on the main question of Home Rule. Both agreed that Ireland should have a central legislative body, "a Parliament in name and in fact," with full control over purely local matters, with power even to protect Irish industries against English and foreign competition.<sup>1</sup> With Lord Carnarvon these were no novel convictions. He had filled the office of Colonial Secretary, and had been struck with the success of self-government in the Colonies—their contentment, their prosperity, their loyalty. Since 1874 he had at intervals discussed Irish Home Rule with Sir Charles Gavan Duffy; and in February 1885 he had sent to the *National Review* an article of Duffy's appealing to the Tories to take up the Irish question and settle it. Under pressure from Duffy and of the Irish Under Secretary, Sir Robert Hamilton, a determined Home Ruler, Carnarvon's Home Rule convictions were strengthened, and after his interview with Parnell he urged his own views on the Cabinet. He failed to convince them. Not that they had any special dread of the danger of Home Rule to the Empire; but they feared that taking it up might injure them at the polls. They would lose more in Great Britain than they would gain in Ireland. It

<sup>1</sup> O'Brien's *Parnell*, ii. 51-57.

does not appear that Parnell knew of the refusal of the Cabinet ; he only knew that Carnarvon was a convinced Home Ruler, and would probably carry his colleagues with him if the Tories were returned to power, and especially if they were returned by Irish votes.

From the Liberals he could hardly expect so much. In July, at a banquet given to Lord Spencer, Mr. John Bright denounced the Irish members of Parliament as disloyal to the Crown and hostile to Great Britain, and charged them with being in sympathy with criminals and murderers.<sup>1</sup> The speech was cheered by the Liberal members present, and was fully endorsed by Lord Hartington. It is true that the Radical leaders, Mr. Chamberlain and Sir Charles Dilke, had absented themselves from the Spencer Banquet, that both had been opponents of Coercion, and that Mr. Chamberlain had vigorously denounced Dublin Castle as an anachronism, and the condition of Ireland under a bureaucratic system of government as that of Poland under Russian or Venice under Austrian rule. But he would go no further than setting up representative County Government, supplemented by a central National Council. This Council was to be mainly elective and wholly executive, with power only to make by-laws, and at every turn was to be hampered, controlled, criticized by the British Parliament. When this scheme was brought before the Liberal Cabinet early in 1885 it was rejected, though it was supported by Gladstone, and would have then been accepted by Parnell.<sup>2</sup> The demands of the latter rose since his interview with Lord Carnarvon. He would no longer be satisfied with a mere National Council without legislative power. And for this reason he discountenanced a proposed public visit to Ireland of Chamberlain and Dilke in the autumn.

As for Mr. Gladstone, he was vague. If he declared for Home Rule before the General Election he would certainly lose the support of Lord Hartington and the Whigs, and also perhaps of Mr. Chamberlain ; and great as his personal popularity in the country was, such a defection would be

<sup>1</sup> Hansard, ccc. 250-305.

<sup>2</sup> O'Brien's *Parnell*, ii. 135-7.



disastrous. On the other hand, he thought there was some secret understanding between the Tories and Parnellites, and he disliked having the Tories more liberal than the Liberals, and wished to compete with them for Irish support.

This was the state of things when Parnell, on the 24th of August, in a speech at Dublin, opened the electoral campaign. No man could speak plainer when he wished, and he wished to make it clear both to Tories and Liberals on what terms Irish votes could be obtained. The time had come, he said, when the Irish platform was to be reduced to a single plank, and that was an Irish Parliament with an Irish executive dependent on it. All other questions were subsidiary to this, indeed had better remain for settlement in an Irish Parliament.<sup>1</sup>

The Irish National Press applauded the speech; the British Press of all shades vigorously condemned it; and Lord Hartington, on the 29th of the same month, told Parnell that he had gone too far and that all England would unite to defeat "so foolish and mischievous a proposal."<sup>2</sup> Mr. Chamberlain (at Warrington, 8th September) was not less emphatic. "If these," he said, "are the terms on which Mr. Parnell's support is to be obtained, I will not enter into the compact. . . . If this claim were conceded, we might as well for ever abandon the hope of maintaining a United Kingdom, and we should establish within thirty miles of our shores a new foreign country, animated from outside with unfriendly intentions towards ourselves." Unlike Lord Hartington, however, Mr. Chamberlain favoured giving to Ireland as generous a measure of self-government as he would give to England or Scotland.<sup>3</sup> Lord Randolph Churchill, unwilling to concede Home Rule, but equally unwilling to offend his Irish friends, said nothing definite.<sup>4</sup> For the same reason Lord Salisbury, at Newport, on the 7th of October, was studiously vague. He thought the first policy of a Tory Government with regard to Ireland "must undoubtedly be to maintain the integrity of the

<sup>1</sup> *Annual Register*, pp. 143-4.      <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 146-7.      <sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 152.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* 150-51.

Empire." But he did not say he was opposed to Home Rule in any shape ; he did not attack Mr. Parnell for the demands he was making ; he defended the abandonment of the Crimes Act ; and he spoke lightly of boycotting as " depending on the passing humour of the population." <sup>1</sup> Alone among prominent men, Mr. John Morley advocated Home Rule " as in Canada," and thought the time was come when Ireland could no longer be governed either by landlords or priests. <sup>2</sup>

Mr. Gladstone was slow to speak. He had, in fact, been unwell, and had taken a voyage to Norway for the benefit of his health. <sup>3</sup> But he had been thinking about Ireland even in Norwegian waters ; he disliked Lord Hartington's attack on Parnell, while disapproving of Parnell's proposals ; and he was convinced that the question of Home Rule had now come within the region of practical politics, and must at least be examined in the hope of finding some solution. In this frame of mind he issued on the 16th of September a long manifesto to the electors. It covered much ground. " The Whigs," said Mr. Morley, " found it vague, the Radicals cautious, the Tories crafty, but everybody admitted that it tended to heal feuds." <sup>4</sup> When he touched the Irish question he neither agreed with Parnell nor condemned him. " In my opinion," he said, " not now for the first time delivered, the limit is clear within which any desires of Ireland, constitutionally ascertained, may, and beyond which they cannot, receive the assent of Parliament. To maintain the supremacy of the Crown, the unity of the Empire, and all the authority of Parliament necessary for the conservation of that unity, is the first duty of every representative of the people. Subject to this governing principle, every grant to portions of the country of enlarged powers is, in my view, not a source of danger but a means of averting it, and is in the nature of a new guarantee for increased cohesion, happiness and strength." And on the question of the maintenance of the Union, he added : " I believe history and posterity will consign to disgrace the name and memory of

<sup>1</sup> *Annual Register*, p. 168.

<sup>3</sup> Morley's *Gladstone*, ii. 457-8.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 154.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* 460.



every man, be he who he may, and on whichever side of the Channel he may dwell, that, having the power to aid in an equitable settlement between Ireland and Great Britain, shall use that power not to aid but to prevent or to retard it. If the duty of working for this end cannot be doubted, then I trust that, on the one hand, Ireland will remember that she is subject to the authority of reason and justice, and cannot always plead the wrongs of other days in bar of submission to them; and that the two sister kingdoms, aware of their overwhelming strength, will dismiss every fear except that of doing wrong, and will make yet another effort to complete a reconciling work which has already done so much to redeem the past, and which, when completed, will yet more redound to the honour of our legislation and our race.”<sup>1</sup>

The conviction that Mr. Gladstone was nearing Home Rule was intensified when his special friend, Mr. Childers, the ex-Chancellor of the Exchequer, declared on the 12th of October at Pontefract that he would himself be willing to give Ireland Home Rule. He would leave her to legislate for herself, with control of police and the judiciary, reserving Imperial rights over foreign policy, military organization, external trade, the Post Office, the currency, coinage, the National Debt and the Court of Ultimate Appeal.<sup>2</sup> Importance was attached to this speech because of Mr. Childers's personal relations with Mr. Gladstone, and in point of fact Mr. Gladstone had been consulted beforehand, and told his friend that he had a “decided sympathy with the general scope and spirit of your proposed declaration about Ireland.”<sup>3</sup> In public he did not go so far. He was friendly, but vague, ready to grant Ireland the fullest measure of local government, but not ready to declare openly for Home Rule, still less to formulate any Home Rule scheme. Mr. Parnell was disappointed. He knew how far Lord Carnarvon would go, and wanted to see if Gladstone and the Liberals would go further. For he was quite prepared to throw his influence on the side which gave the largest

<sup>1</sup> *Annual Register*, pp. 157-8.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 171.

<sup>3</sup> Morley's *Gladstone*, ii. 475-6.

concessions. But Gladstone was not to be drawn. He had to keep his party together, and instead of formulating a Home Rule scheme, he pleaded on the platform for such a majority as would enable the Liberals to settle the Irish question independent of the Irish members. This was just what Mr. Parnell was determined he should not have. Further, he satisfied himself that with the opposition of Lord Hartington, and probably also of Mr. Chamberlain, the Liberal leader would not be able to go so far as the Tories. In this belief Mr. Parnell issued a manifesto advising the Irish voters in Great Britain to support the Tories at the polls.

Certainly the language of this manifesto lacked nothing in vigour. The Irish voters were asked to vote everywhere against "the men who coerced Ireland, deluged Egypt with blood, menaced religious liberty in the school, the freedom of speech in Parliament, and promised to the country generally a repetition of the crimes and follies of the last Liberal Administration. The specious demand for a majority against the Irish Party is an appeal for power to crush all Anti-Radical members in Parliament first; then to propose to Ireland some scheme doomed to failure, because of its unsuitability to the wants of the Irish people; and finally to force down a halting measure of self-government upon the Irish people, by the same methods of wholesale imprisonment by which durability was sought for the impracticable Land Act of 1881."<sup>1</sup>

The exciting contest on which so much depended was soon over. The Tories numbered just 249, the Liberals 335, the Home Rulers 86. Neither of the two great English parties was satisfied. The Tories hoped, by the aid of the Irish vote, to have such a number as would enable them to form a Government. The Liberals, having passed a great measure of enfranchisement, expected that the newly enfranchised would have flocked to their standards, and that a sweeping Liberal victory and the all but annihilation of the Tories would be the result. The Irish alone had done well. In Munster, Leinster and Connaught they had literally

<sup>1</sup> *Annual Register*, pp. 180-81.



swept the board. Trinity College continued to return Tories ; but Trinity College had no representative capacity, and its verdict carried no weight. Everywhere else in Leinster the Tories went down. In several instances the Home Rulers had been returned unopposed, their opponents being afraid to provoke a contest. Where contests had taken place the Home Rulers outnumbered their opponents by more than ten to one. In South Mayo the numbers were 4900 to 75 ; in West Mayo 4790 to 131 ; in East Kerry 3169 to 30 ; in many other cases the disparity between Home Rulers and Anti-Home Rulers was nearly as great. Nor was this all. Even in Ulster, hitherto the stronghold of landlord ascendancy and religious bigotry, the Home Rulers had a majority. Of its 33 members, 17 were pledged supporters of Parnell ; Derry and West Belfast had all but been captured. Mr. Healy had been returned for South Derry ; Mr. William O'Brien for South Tyrone. This result was all the more remarkable in face of the notorious jerrymandering of many seats. Under the new arrangement of single-member constituencies, set up by the Redistribution Act, commissioners had been appointed to fix the boundaries, and they had often done so in a partizan fashion, so as to defeat the Home Rulers. And yet Ulster had gone over to Parnell, and a majority of its members had agreed, as had all others elected on the Home Rule ticket, to sit, act and vote with the Irish Party ; the violation of this pledge entailing instant resignation as a punishment.

In all, 85 out of the 103 Irish members were followers of Mr. Parnell. Mr. T. P. O'Connor had also been returned for the Scotland Road division of Liverpool, thus making the Parnellites 86. There were 18 Irish Tories, but not one single Liberal had been elected in Ireland. Equally significant was the fact that 22 of the Home Rulers elected had been imprisoned by Mr. Forster.<sup>1</sup>

In the meantime one noted event had taken place in Ireland, not connected with the General Election, but of

<sup>1</sup> *Parnell Movement*, pp. 272-3.

sufficient importance to excite national interest. In February, Cardinal MacCabe, the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin, died. He had been the nominee of Cardinal Cullen, and was quite as much out of sympathy with Irish popular movements. Two names were specially mentioned for the high office which he had filled—Dr. Walsh, the President of Maynooth College, and Dr. Moran, the Archbishop of Sydney. Dr. Walsh was well known to hold popular views and to be possessed of a manly and fearless spirit. Dr. Moran, who was a nephew of Cardinal Cullen, was believed to share his uncle's views on public questions, and was therefore favoured by the British influence at Rome. Mr. Errington, a sort of unofficial British envoy at the Vatican, was specially busy in the work of intrigue, and assured Lord Granville in May that he was keeping "the Vatican in humour,"<sup>1</sup> and was evidently hoping to keep Dr. Walsh out, though the latter was the almost unanimous selection of the priests of Dublin. For months the Archbishopric remained undecided. A change of Government brought no change; for the Tories, quite as much as the Liberals, were anxious that British influence should prevail. But in August Mr. William O'Brien somehow got possession of Mr. Errington's letter of May to Lord Granville, and published it in *United Ireland*. The result was that intrigues ceased, and forthwith Dr. Walsh was appointed Archbishop of Dublin. That his learning and ability were enormous—far greater than that of any who had ever filled the See of Dublin—was well known. But the extraordinary outburst of enthusiasm that hailed his appointment was due not so much to this as to the fact that he had to combat British intrigue. Nor did the English Government do justice to his opponent when they supposed him to be an enemy to Irish national aspirations. He has, on the contrary, shown himself to be a pronounced advocate of Home Rule. And in the field of Irish historical research Dr. Moran has done work that will endure. Altogether he is a commanding figure in the Catholic Church, an Irish-born Cardinal who

<sup>1</sup> O'Brien's *Parnell*, ii. 27.



has brought to a far-off land the highest qualities of scholarship and religious zeal.

In August Dr. Walsh returned from Rome to Ireland as Archbishop; before the end of December the General Election was over, and when the new year dawned the air was thick with rumours as to what the immediate future would bring. It was evident that the Tories could not continue in office. At the head of a strong party it is probable that Lord Churchill and his colleagues would have brought in a Home Rule measure acceptable to the Irish party. But being only 250 in number, they were not strong enough to discard the Orangemen, and the Orangemen would never consent to Home Rule. "I have done my best for you," said Lord Churchill to the Irish leaders, "and have failed; and now, of course, I'll do my best against you."<sup>1</sup> What that meant soon appeared. Lord Carnarvon and the Chief Secretary resigned and were replaced by Lord Londonderry, the descendant of Castlereagh, and by Mr. W. H. Smith, one of the most anti-Irish of the Tories. Concurrently with these changes there were many Tory speeches describing Ireland as in a state of lawlessness; and in January, when Parliament opened, the Queen's Speech declared emphatically against Home Rule and called for further powers of repression. A little later a Bill was promised to suppress the National League.<sup>2</sup> A Government with such a policy was not to be maintained in office by Irish votes, and when Mr. Jesse Collings moved an amendment to the Address in favour of small holdings for agricultural labourers he was supported by Liberals and Irish. A few Whigs, led by Lord Hartington and Mr. Goschen, voted with the Tories, but the Liberals and Irish carried the day, and by 329 to 259 votes the Tories were driven from office.<sup>3</sup>

Mr. Gladstone then became Prime Minister. His subsequent attitude on the Irish question was often described by his opponents as unworthy of him. It was said that his

<sup>1</sup> *Parnell Movement*, p. 274.

<sup>2</sup> *Annual Register*, pp. 12, 25.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 32.

acceptance of Home Rule was due to his anxiety to return to office, that his conversion was not the result of conviction, and was as sudden as that of Saul of Tarsus. But this is an unfair statement of the case. As far back as 1882 he favoured local government for Ireland, pointing out to Mr. Forster that "until we have seriously responsible bodies to deal with us in Ireland, every plan we frame comes to Irishmen as an English plan, and as such is probably condemned."<sup>1</sup> For the time Mr. Forster's obstinacy blocked the path of reform, and the Phœnix Park murders turned the public mind from concession to coercion. But Mr. Gladstone eagerly waited for the calm which was to follow the storm, and in May 1885 he proposed for Ireland a "central Board of Local Government on something of an elective basis,"<sup>2</sup> a plan which had the merit of being acceptable both to Mr. Parnell and Mr. Chamberlain. It was not, however, acceptable to all Mr. Gladstone's colleagues in the Cabinet, and was therefore dropped. The proposed scheme was not the same as setting up an Irish Parliament, but it might in time develop into such; and Mr. Gladstone was certain that the rejection of the smaller measure would lead only to larger demands being made by Ireland. Carefully guarding himself against acceptance or rejection of such possible demands, he waited for the result of the General Election. Hitherto Home Rule had been asked by a minority of Irish members—an active and able minority no doubt, but yet a minority. It stood on a different footing when it was asked by five-sixths of the Irish representatives. As a constitutional leader Mr. Gladstone saw that a crisis had come, that Home Rule had become a living reality in the field of practical politics, and could no longer be ignored. That he was not anxious for power or personal triumph was evident from the fact that he desired the Tories would settle the question, promising them his support. Lord Salisbury could then ignore the Orangemen. Mr. Gladstone could ignore the Whigs, and a moderate measure of Home Rule could be passed, acceptable to all reasonable Irishmen, though

<sup>1</sup> Morley's *Gladstone*, ii. 298.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 431.



not necessarily acceptable to the extreme Irish demand. The Tory leaders, however, rejected these proposals, and then, and only then, did Mr. Gladstone drive the Tories out, and accepted office with the object of settling the Irish question on lines acceptable to Mr. Parnell.<sup>1</sup>

His task was one of extreme difficulty. Lord Hartington would have no Home Rule, would not even consider the question with the object of discovering some solution;<sup>2</sup> and though on Mr. Collings's amendment his strength was but eighteen, it would probably be greater as an opponent of Home Rule. Mr. Goschen shared Lord Hartington's views, as did the eminent Liberal lawyer, Sir Henry James. Mr. Chamberlain was willing to go further than these, but unwilling to set up an Irish legislative assembly. With the instinct of the trader he could only deal with hard facts, and rather as a shopkeeper than as a statesman. Businesslike, unsympathetic, unimaginative, he took no account of sentiment, of tradition, of national pride. The associations in the mind of Ireland with her lost Parliament, the wit of Curran, the statesmanship of Flood, the eloquence of Plunkett, the genius of Grattan appealed to him not at all. With the haughty exclusiveness of an Imperialist, he would only concede a Board or Council with power to deal with roads and bridges and water and gas, and professed to see danger to his own country in conceding an Irish Parliament, though its powers should be limited and circumscribed and it should be entirely subordinate to the Imperial Parliament. He was willing, however, to examine the Irish question, and took office, though he was not sanguine that Mr. Parnell's demand could be conceded without sacrificing the unity of the Empire.<sup>3</sup>

Mr. Trevelyan also took office, but like Mr. Chamberlain was hesitating and timorous. But Lord Granville, Lord Ripon, Lord Rosebery, Lord Aberdeen, Mr. Campbell-Bannerman and Sir William Harcourt took office without hesitation and without making conditions. So also did the great lawyer, Sir Charles Russell. And Lord Spencer pronounced unequivocally for Home

<sup>1</sup> Morley's *Gladstone*, ii. 499-500; *Churchill's Life*, ii. 29-31.

<sup>2</sup> Morley's *Gladstone*, ii. 533-4.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 534-5.

Rule. He had administered coercion in Ireland with vigour and without fear, but experience had taught him that its use was at best but temporary, and that generous concessions were a surer and safer remedy for Irish ills.<sup>1</sup> In the new Cabinet also was Mr. John Morley, who took the office of Chief Secretary for Ireland. As journalist and author he was already well known, and though not long in Parliament had already made his mark as a speaker. His speeches were characterized by that literary charm which marks his writings, and on the platform and in Parliament his finished sentences fell pleasantly on the ear. Manly, outspoken, courageous, a man of deep thought and strong conviction, he thought out political problems for himself, and arrived at his own conclusions; and while the Tories were yet in office he declared boldly for Home Rule. Such were the men who formed Mr. Gladstone's Cabinet, and who, during the months of February and March, endeavoured to elaborate a Home Rule Bill and a Land Purchase Bill for Ireland.<sup>2</sup>

While this work was proceeding, Mr. W. E. Forster died, and thus disappeared one determined enemy of Home Rule. There was a deep pathos in such an ending to such a career. No other Chief Secretary in modern times had so deeply roused Irish passion. The memory of Buckshot Forster was execrated little less than that of Cromwell. Jails filled, free speech denied, newspapers and meetings suppressed, constitutional rights denied—these were the fruits of his rule. And while the innocent was often punished, murder was unpunished, and the murderers were free and even unknown. Ignoring the healing effects of concession on a disturbed Ireland, his cry was for more coercion. He wanted the Crimes Act renewed in 1885, and was reluctant about conceding Mr. Chamberlain's Central Board,<sup>3</sup> and when Mr. Gladstone went beyond this in 1886, Forster held up his hands in horror, for now surely the dismemberment of the Empire was at hand.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Morley's *Gladstone*, ii. 537.

<sup>2</sup> *Annual Register*, pp. 36-37; Morley's *Gladstone*, ii. 537.

<sup>3</sup> Reid's *Life of Forster*, ii. 508.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* 553-4.



And yet the man's heart was kind and he really loved Ireland. In 1847 he had helped the starving Irish peasants, and in March 1886 one of the last acts of his life was to send a subscription to Ireland to relieve distress on the desolate island of Innisboffin.<sup>1</sup>

On the 8th of April Mr. Gladstone introduced his Home Rule Bill amid scenes such as had rarely been witnessed at Westminster. At break of day members hurried to the House of Commons to secure seats ; at eleven o'clock scarcely a single seat was vacant ; and when Mr. Gladstone entered the House after four o'clock many members, unable to get other accommodation, occupied chairs on the floor of the House. Outside in the lobbies knots gathered to discuss the political situation and speculate as to what the immediate future would reveal. The galleries were all filled. Peers, peeresses, prelates, princes of the blood, ambassadors of foreign powers, rank and station and beauty and learning looked down with eagerness on the historic scene. As Mr. Gladstone entered he was greeted with enthusiastic cheers from the Liberal and Irish benches. He rose at half-past four, and for three hours and a half he unfolded his scheme. The extent of ground to be covered, the vast interests involved, the complexity of detail called rather for exposition than for eloquence ; and Mr. Gladstone could of all men clearly expound. But eloquence and argument also were not wanting. The long march of historic events, the centuries of oppression on the one hand and of suffering on the other, the confiscations and plantations which make up so much of Irish history, and which tell of Ireland's martyrdom and of England's shame, were all familiar to the orator, and stirred him to eloquent outbursts. His exquisite voice, flexible in the highest degree, rose in declamation or sank in appeal as he denounced the infamy of the Act of Union, or pleaded for justice and fair-play for a long-tried and sorely-oppressed land. Reminding his hearers that the Union had been followed by coercion rather than by equal laws, he recalled how even concessions being too long delayed had been robbed of grace and

<sup>1</sup> *Life*, ii. 559.

healing effect. England, he said, had taken no account of Irish ideas, Irish feelings, Irish prejudices ; her wants and wishes had not been consulted by Parliament ; and law had always been suspected by Ireland because it had come clothed in a foreign garb. He could see no alternative to Home Rule but drastic coercion ; no incongruity in conceding to Ireland the demands of five-sixths of her representatives ; no national danger but rather national security in the extension and enlargement of local powers ; and nothing in his proposals inconsistent with the unity of the Empire or the supremacy of the Imperial Parliament. He instanced the cases of Austria and Hungary, of Norway and Sweden, and of many of the British colonies to show that Home Rule had worked well, and he believed that in Ireland also similar happy results would follow. New powers and responsibilities would bring steadiness and sobriety and contentment ; loyalty would replace disloyalty and discontent ; old wounds would be healed ; the strife of centuries would be closed, and bitter memories would be for ever exorcised.<sup>1</sup>

The proposed Irish Assembly would consist of two orders. The lower order, consisting of 206 members, would be elected for five years on the existing Parliamentary franchise. The upper order, consisting of 103 members—28 representative Irish peers and 75 others, with a property qualification of £200 a year—would be elected for ten years by those rated at £25 a year. Both orders would ordinarily sit and vote together ; but they might deliberate separately, and if while doing so they disagreed as to any Bill, a temporary veto was the result. Irish members would no longer sit at Westminster. The Viceroy representing the Sovereign would not be a party man, ceasing to hold office with the party who appointed him. He could assent to and veto Bills, and summon and dissolve Parliament ; nor could the Irish Parliament curtail his powers. The Irish executive would be responsible to the Irish Parliament, and judges would be appointed for life as in England. Reserved to the Imperial Parliament were the imposition and collection

<sup>1</sup> Hansard, ccciv.



of customs and excise duties, all questions of peace and war, foreign relations, trade, navigation and copyright, and control over the sea and land forces and national defences. Nor could the Irish Parliament endow any religion or impose any incapacity because of religious belief, nor could it have control over the police until some years had elapsed. Revising the fiscal arrangement settled in 1817, Ireland's contribution to the Imperial Exchequer would henceforth be one-fifteenth; this arrangement to last for thirty years, after which it might be revised. The Irish Government would also take over all loans due to the British Treasury which had been advanced for Irish purposes, but was to be handed over the balance of the Irish Church Surplus.<sup>1</sup>

Supplementary to the Home Rule Bill was the Irish Land Purchase Bill, which Mr. Gladstone introduced on the 16th of April. The House of Lords, being a House of landlords and always specially partial to Irish landlordism, would never assent to Home Rule if Irish landlords were to be left to the mercy of an Irish Parliament. But if the Irish landlords were bought out at a high figure the Lords' assent to Home Rule would be the more readily obtained. This was Mr. Gladstone's hope, and it was for this reason he brought in his Land Purchase Bill. It provided for the buying out by the State of all landlords who wished to sell. The price, which was to be fixed by the Land Courts, was estimated at twenty years' purchase of the net rent, and would be advanced by the British Treasury and repayable by the tenants—principal and interest—in forty-nine years, at 4 per cent of the purchase money. A British official, called a Receiver-General, was to be appointed, whose duty it would be to transmit the rent-charge and all other items of revenue payable from Ireland to the British Treasury. But he would be merely an executive officer, and would have no power to levy any tax.<sup>2</sup>

Both the Home Rule and Land Purchase Bills passed their

<sup>1</sup> *Parnell Movement*, pp. 275-80; Pamphlet by Sydney Buxton, *Mr. Gladstone's Irish Bills*.

<sup>2</sup> *Parnell Movement*, pp. 280-82; Hansard, ccciv. 1778-1810.

first reading without a division ; but neither was received with enthusiasm and neither escaped hostile criticism. Mr. Parnell, whom Mr. Gladstone had so fiercely denounced in 1881, had special reasons for being elated, but even he was cautious and critical. He disliked the Land Purchase Bill ; he disliked the provisions about the control of the police ; he wanted power to protect Irish industries ; and he fought hard with Mr. Gladstone before the Home Rule Bill was introduced to have the contribution from Ireland to the Imperial Exchequer fixed at a twentieth rather than a fifteenth, firmly convinced that the latter was too high. He hoped that on these points concessions would be made in Committee, and it was at least possible that if such were to be refused he would wreck the Bill.<sup>1</sup>

The Orangemen were specially enraged, protesting against the infamy of handing over the loyal Protestants of Ireland to rebels and traitors.<sup>2</sup> The better to rouse them to fury, Lord Randolph Churchill went to Belfast, and in language of reckless violence urged on the Ulstermen to resist, predicting that if ever Mr. Gladstone's Home Rule Bill became law, "Ulster would fight and Ulster would be right." These fiery incitements applied to such inflammable material helped to stir up disorder and riots in Belfast, resulting in the loss of many lives. A Government note-taker was sent to report the noble Lord's speeches, which Mr. Morley described as full of contingent sedition ;<sup>3</sup> and when the late ally of the Irish Party found that even a Tory lord could not defy the law with impunity he fled to England. He was on safer ground in the House of Commons, and described the Home Rule Bill as a mass of contradictions and absurdities.<sup>4</sup> Sir M. Hicks-Beach believed that the Bill would in no way be a final settlement.<sup>5</sup> Lord Salisbury was equally strong, declaring that there was no middle term between government at Westminster and independent and entirely separate government at Dublin.<sup>6</sup> And

<sup>1</sup> Morley's *Gladstone*, ii. 546.

<sup>2</sup> Hansard, ccciv. : Speeches of Colonel Waring, Johnson, etc.

<sup>3</sup> Hansard, ccciv. 1268 ; *Churchill's Life*, ii. 60-65.

<sup>4</sup> *Annual Register*, p. 112.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* 118.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* 132.



the Tory newspapers, from the *Times* down, approved of and adopted the language of Lord Salisbury. But it was from the Liberal ranks that the most damaging criticisms came. That Lord Hartington and Mr. Goschen should oppose Home Rule was to be expected, and it excited no surprise when they appeared on the same platform with Lord Salisbury and Mr. W. H. Smith in opposition to Mr. Gladstone's Bill. And both vigorously denounced it on its first reading in the House of Commons.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Trevelyan and Mr. Chamberlain were on different ground. They had taken office under Mr. Gladstone. They were not indeed enthusiastic supporters, and as they failed in the Cabinet to mould Mr. Gladstone's scheme in accordance with their own views, they resigned. They resigned before the Home Rule Bill was introduced, and on its first reading they vigorously assailed it. Mr. Trevelyan, who spoke first,<sup>2</sup> objected to have the police, even for a time, independent of the Irish Government; he objected to the financial provisions; he objected to the attempted distinction between local and Imperial questions; and he objected to any scheme for buying out the Irish landlords. He was in favour of a large and generous measure of local government for Ireland, but he stopped short at a legislative assembly, which would give supreme power to Mr. Parnell and his followers. Mr. Chamberlain was an abler debater than Mr. Trevelyan and a far less scrupulous politician. He too was in favour of a large measure of local government for Ireland, he was even in favour of Federation, but he would not accept Mr. Gladstone's scheme. He objected to the exclusion of the Irish members from the Imperial Parliament; it would place them in a degrading position. He objected to the proposed fiscal arrangements. He objected to laying a heavy burden on the British taxpayer for the purpose of bribing Irish landlords. He believed that Mr. Gladstone's measure would only lead to further agitations and ill-feeling; and he declared his readiness to vote for total separation rather than vote for such a Bill.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Annual Register*, pp. 131-3.

<sup>2</sup> Hansard, ccciv. 1104-24.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 1182-1207.

Had Mr. Gladstone consulted Mr. Chamberlain more frequently, had he deferred more to his views, had he rated his abilities higher, and, giving him the post of Chancellor of the Exchequer, made him the heir-apparent to the Liberal Premiership, it may be that the younger man's aversion to Home Rule would have been overcome and his opposition changed into support. But Mr. Gladstone disliked some of Mr. Chamberlain's Radical schemes and his manner of putting them before the public; he did not rate his abilities as of the first order, and seems never to have regarded him as a possible Liberal Premier. Mr. Chamberlain, conscious of great powers, must have felt hurt at all this; nor did any one assail both of Mr. Gladstone's Bills with such vehemence and passion. On the first reading of the Home Rule Bill his criticism was scathing and severe, and on the Land Purchase Bill he indulged in similar criticism. And passing from Parliament to the platform, he used every artifice of an unscrupulous politician to prejudice the public mind. Prodigious of prophecy, he foretold that Mr. Gladstone's Home Rule Bill would lead to constant friction, to further agitation, to ultimate separation. It would set up, within thirty miles of the shores of Great Britain, an independent and hostile nation. And he said this in spite of the fact that Army and Navy, Militia and Volunteers were still to be exclusively under the control of the British Parliament. Though in favour of Land Purchase, and convinced, as his subsequent conduct proved, that it involved no danger to the State and imposed no burden on the British taxpayer, he predicted that the Irish tenants would repudiate their bargain and strike against the payment of rents; and thus would the hard-earned money of British workmen be squandered on thriftless Irish landlords and dishonest Irish tenants. "Workmen of England and Scotland," he said, "where is your remedy? You will be Irish landlords; you will have to evict the tenants; you will have to collect your rents at the point of the bayonet; and I refuse to be a party to such contingencies."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Annual Register*, pp. 158-60; O'Brien's *Parnell*, ii. 136; Hansard, cccvi.



Lesser men among the Liberals, such as Mr. Courtney and Mr. Caine, followed the lead of Mr. Chamberlain, though they were not so eloquent in speech nor unscrupulous in attack.<sup>1</sup> On more than one platform also Lord Hartington repeated the arguments he had used in the House of Commons; and Mr. Goschen, on the same side, surprised both friends and foes by the fire with which he spoke.<sup>2</sup> But though these speeches were not without effect and the Land Purchase Bill was everywhere coldly received, the Liberal associations throughout Great Britain were unwilling to desert Mr. Gladstone's army, even when Mr. Chamberlain sounded the bugle-call.<sup>3</sup> Much of this, no doubt, was due to the great personality of Mr. Gladstone; much to the fact that Irish opinion all over the world favoured his measures and even welcomed them with gratitude; much to the able speeches made by Sir William Harcourt and others in the House of Commons. And many were convinced by the thoughtful and reasoned arguments of Mr. Morley on public platforms; still more perhaps by the public speeches of Lord Spencer. His high character, his stainless honour, his manifest patriotism, his zeal for the public interests were everywhere recognized. Nor could the masses fail to be impressed when such a man, with his recent experiences in Ireland, declared that there was no alternative to Home Rule but Coercion, that he could see nothing in Mr. Gladstone's Bill involving separation or dismemberment, and that Home Rule, and that only, would bring contentment and peace.<sup>4</sup>

Mr. Gladstone's position was still further strengthened when he foreshadowed the abandonment of the Land Bill, warning the Irish landlords that the sands in the hour-glass were running out. And he declared further that his Home Rule Bill was not a cast-iron measure. It was open to amendment. Let his followers but vote for the second reading, and he would postpone the question until autumn, and then he would recast and reintroduce the Bill.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Annual Register*, p. 161.    <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 157-8, 168-9.    <sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 165-6.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* 151-4; Fitzmaurice's *Life of Lord Granville*, ii. 484-5.

<sup>5</sup> Morley's *Gladstone*, ii. 572-4; *Annual Register*, pp. 194-6.

One great Englishman, Mr. John Bright, had hitherto kept silent, and men were specially anxious to know what were his views. The friend and comrade of Cobden, the eloquent advocate of every popular measure, the champion of freedom in every land, he commanded the passionate attachment of the English masses. And in Ireland his name was held dear. Her miseries and wrongs had touched his heart, her oppression by a stronger power had roused his anger ; he was her friend in dark days, when few Englishmen were her friends, and it would be strange if he deserted her now when his old friend, Mr. Gladstone, was opening to her the gates of freedom. But there are some men whose love of freedom grows cold with the advance of age, and signs were not wanting that Mr. Bright was one of these. Forgetting apparently that the Irish members were freely elected by Ireland and represented her views, he had conceived an unreasoning dislike for them, and had no better names for them than rebels and traitors. He could not believe them loyal, honourable or truthful, and told Mr. Gladstone, in the middle of May, that his policy of surrender to them would be disastrous both to Ireland and to Great Britain. He did not, however, favour Mr. Chamberlain's scheme of Federation ; and he was utterly opposed to the Land Purchase Bill.<sup>1</sup> A fortnight later, in spite of his deep personal attachment to Mr. Gladstone and his desire to agree with him, his views remained the same. He did not, indeed, think that an Irish Parliament would favour religious persecution, or separation, or a policy of public plunder ; and he heartily approved of the clause in the Home Rule Bill excluding the Irish members from Westminster. And yet he was opposed to the Home Rule and to the Land Purchase Bills. Out of respect for Mr. Gladstone he had hitherto held his tongue, but a few days later he declared publicly against his old friend. This was welcome news for Mr. Chamberlain, for it meant that Home Rule had received its death-blow.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Morley, ii. 567-9.

<sup>2</sup> O'Brien's *Parnell*, ii. 146-52. See also the *Cornhill Magazine* for October 1908, and *Truth*, 14th October of the same year.



The second reading debate was then proceeding. It was opened by Mr. Gladstone in a speech, argumentative and conciliatory, in which he laid special emphasis on the fact that the only alternative to Home Rule was Coercion.<sup>1</sup> A little later this policy was boldly avowed outside Parliament by Lord Salisbury, who likened the Irish to Hottentots, and whose prescription for Ireland was twenty years of resolute government, meaning twenty years of continuous coercion. Meantime Lord Hartington had moved the rejection of the Home Rule Bill, having been followed on the same side by Sir Henry James, Mr. Goschen and Mr. Trevelyan, and by some of the Ulster members, the latter shrieking wildly that they were being betrayed.<sup>2</sup> On the other side important speeches were made by Mr. Bryce, Mr. Campbell-Bannerman, Sir Charles Russell and Mr. Morley; while from the Irish benches Mr. William O'Brien spoke with admirable temper and convincing force.<sup>3</sup> And Mr. Stansfield made damaging use of Lord Salisbury's Hottentot speech, describing it as "excelling in calculated recklessness the wildest speech ever uttered by Nationalist or Orangeman."<sup>4</sup>

The long debate often dragged wearily, until the night of the 1st of June, when Mr. Chamberlain spoke. Knowing the popularity of Mr. Gladstone throughout the country, he was careful to make no attack on him; and knowing the feeling among the Liberal electors in favour of Home Rule, he declared his agreement with the principle, but not with Mr. Gladstone's scheme. He carefully avoided any reference to the alternative policy of Coercion, and seized on all the weak points of Mr. Gladstone's whole Irish policy with the skill and dexterity of a practised hand.<sup>5</sup> He was answered from the Liberal benches by Sir William Harcourt, and from the Irish by Mr. T. M. Healy, Mr. Dillon, Mr. T. P. O'Connor and Mr. Sexton. The speech of the latter was second only to Mr. Gladstone's, fully equal

<sup>1</sup> Hansard, cccv.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* cccv.-cccv.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* cccv. 622-32.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* 1178-9.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* ccv. 675-700.

to Mr. Chamberlain's in debating power, and far beyond it in sustained eloquence.<sup>1</sup>

On the 7th of June, the last night of the memorable debate, Mr. Parnell spoke, making what Mr. Morley described as a masterly speech—"not the mere dialectic of a party debate, but the utterance of a statesman. . . . As he dealt with Ulster, with finance, with the supremacy of Parliament, with the loyal minority, with the settlement of education in an Irish legislature—soberly, steadily, deliberately, with that full, familiar, deep insight into the facts of a country which is only possible to a man who belongs to it and has passed his life in it—the effect of Mr. Parnell's speech was to make even able disputants on either side look little better than amateurs."<sup>2</sup> This is remarkable testimony to Mr. Parnell's powers from so competent a critic, but whoever peruses the speech will readily admit its justice.

Sir M. Hicks-Beach wound up the debate for the Opposition, following Mr. Cowen, who made an extremely eloquent speech for the Bill; and then Mr. Gladstone rose, just as the clock tolled the midnight hour. His speech was worthy of the occasion and of the man. Avoiding petty recrimination and personal attack, it was marked by cogent reasoning, by persuasive argument, by solemn appeal. The interests of two nations long divided were at stake, the opportunity to close ancient feuds had come, and Mr. Gladstone, recalling the past and peering into the future, spoke less as an advocate than as a statesman. With his opponents he dealt not ungenerously. Mr. Chamberlain alone he treated with mocking contempt. That gentleman had avowed that he did not fear a dissolution; and Mr. Gladstone declared that he was not surprised, for Mr. Chamberlain had carefully trimmed his sails to catch every passing breeze. If his audience at an election favoured the Home Rule Bill then before Parliament, he could say that he had voted in favour of its principle. If they declared against it, he could point to his vote on the second reading. If they wanted a larger Bill, he could say he had declared for

<sup>1</sup> Hansard, cccvi. 700-731.

<sup>2</sup> Morley's *Gladstone*, ii. 557.



Federation. If his audience thought the Bill went too far, he could say that the last of his own plans was for "four provincial circuits controlled from London."

Leaving Mr. Chamberlain and all his changing schemes, Mr. Gladstone took higher ground, closing with a peroration worthy of his palmiest days. "Ireland," he said, "stands at your bar expectant, hopeful, almost suppliant. Her words are the words of truth and soberness. She asks a blessed oblivion of the past, and in that oblivion our interest is deeper even than hers. You have been asked to-night to abide by the traditions of which we are the heirs. What traditions? By the Irish traditions? Go into the length and breadth of the world, ransack the literature of all countries, find if you can a single voice, a single book, in which the conduct of England towards Ireland is anywhere treated except with profound and bitter condemnation. Are these the traditions by which we are exhorted to stand? No, they are a sad exception to the glory of our country. They are a broad and black spot upon the pages of its history, and what we want to do is to stand by the traditions of which we are the heirs in all matters except our relations with Ireland, and to make our relations with Ireland to conform to the other traditions of our country. So we treat our traditions, so we hail the demand of Ireland for what I call a blessed oblivion of the past. She asks also a boon for the future, and that boon for the future, unless we are much mistaken, will be a boon to us in respect of honour, no less than a boon to her in respect of happiness, prosperity and peace. Such, sir, is her prayer. Think, I beseech you; think well, think wisely, think not for the moment but for the years that are to come, before you reject this Bill."<sup>1</sup>

The eloquent appeal was in vain. The curious combination of Tories and Whigs, of Birmingham Radicals and Ulster Orangemen, held firmly together, and only 313 voted for the Bill while 343 voted against it, thus having an adverse majority of 30. For the moment Mr. Chamberlain was triumphant, and the Home Rule banner was in the dust.

<sup>1</sup> Morley, ii. 579-80; Hansard, cccvi.

## CHAPTER XV

### *The Unionist Government*

AFTER the defeat of the Home Rule Bill some members of Mr. Gladstone's Cabinet favoured resignation rather than dissolution. Their opponents would then be compelled to disclose their policy, and if they had nothing to offer as an alternative to Home Rule but Coercion, the alliance between Tories and dissentient Liberals would be short-lived. But Mr. Gladstone, who favoured dissolution, stated that he knew of no instance in which a Government defeated on a great national question failed to appeal from Parliament to the people. And if the Home Rule Government now deviated from well-established precedent, it would be said that they feared to face the people, and had themselves lost confidence in Home Rule. Mr. Gladstone's arguments were convincing as his authority was overwhelming, and Parliament was dissolved in the last week of June.<sup>1</sup>

The fight which followed was a fight of giants. Nor did Mr. Gladstone ever appear so great. Faced by powerful foes, deserted by friends who had long fought by his side, weighed down by the burden of seventy-six years, this wonderful old man, inspired by confidence and conviction, entered the lists with the courage and enthusiasm of youth. He had, it is true, many grounds for hope. The alternative Tory policy of Coercion was not popular. On the other hand, the prospect of a final settlement of the eternal Irish question, which had perplexed so many Parliaments and ruined so many Ministers,

<sup>1</sup> Morley's *Gladstone*, ii. 581-2.



had its attraction for the electors ;<sup>1</sup> and Mr. Gladstone could point to the fact that his Home Rule Bill was accepted by five-sixths of the Irish representatives and by the organs of Irish opinion throughout the world. The Irish vote in Great Britain would also be an important factor in the struggle, and as it had turned the scales in many constituencies in the previous year in favour of the Tories, it would now turn the scales for the Liberals.

Mr. Gladstone was further encouraged by the votes of confidence from so many Liberal associations, and was assured by Mr. Schnadhorst, the chief Liberal organizer, that the electors were in advance of their representatives, and that a General Election would mean victory for Home Rule. Mr. Gladstone had also confidence in himself, in his eloquence, his powers of persuasion, in the enthusiasm which he inspired ; believing that if his opponents had with them "class and the dependents of class," the people's hearts were with him.<sup>2</sup>

Yet the strength of his opponents was indeed great, well calculated to strike even a great orator and statesman with dismay. "You have power," said Mr. Gladstone, "you have wealth, you have rank, you have station, you have organization, you have the place of power."<sup>3</sup> Nor did this formidable combination neglect any weapon which could be effectively employed. Argument, appeal, national pride, ancient prejudice, class hatred, selfish interests, social ostracism were all requisitioned. Home Rulers were blackballed in clubs and avoided in the streets. Great magnates ceased to ask them to their country-houses or include them in their dinner-parties. They were shunned in the racing-paddock and in the hunting-field. A lady specially asked that she should not be placed at dinner next to Lord Granville, who, being a Home Ruler, was a traitor to his country. And the occupant of a suburban villa could not believe that any of his neighbours were Home

<sup>1</sup> *Life of Granville*, ii. 469. "The bribe to me, and I suspect to Great Britain, which would have most effect, would be to get rid of the Irish members from the House of Commons, into which they are introducing dry rot" (Granville to Lord Spencer, Dec. 1885).

<sup>2</sup> Hansard, cccvi. 1239.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

Rulers, because, if so, they could not be gentlemen.<sup>1</sup> The Press attacked Mr. Gladstone and his Home Rule policy with bitterness. The pulpit rang with denunciations of the man who had destroyed the Irish Church and who was now bent on destroying the British Empire. The General Assembly of the Irish Presbyterian Church and the General Synod of the Protestant Church joined hands in protesting against a Parliament at Dublin manned by rebels and traitors. Irish officials with big salaries and little work used all the influence they could command against the new policy. Ulster Orangemen breathed threats of civil war. Lord Randolph Churchill described the Home Rule Bill as one that might have come from Bedlam or Colney Hatch.<sup>2</sup> Mr. Bright openly proclaimed his opposition, and, blinded by prejudice against the Irish members, became the champion of Ulster bigotry. Lord Hartington put the Whig case without, however, being offensive to his great opponent. As for Mr. Chamberlain, his objections and alternative schemes followed each other with bewildering rapidity. And for the minor combatants no statement was too extravagant to make. Visions of popery enthroned on high, of an Ulster ablaze, of an Ireland in revolt against England were conjured up; and one Unionist orator claimed Mr. Gladstone's authority for the statement that the State purchase of the Irish landlords would add between three and four hundred millions to the National Debt.<sup>3</sup> The Unionist combination indeed was a strange one: the Whig and the Tory democrat, the Orangeman and the Radical, the Primrose dame and the Irish Presbyterian, the parson and the publican, the artisan from the slums of Birmingham and the plutocrat from Park Lane.

Like Napoleon after Leipsic, Mr. Gladstone had to lament the desertion of some of his comrades-in-arms. But not a few of the old comrades were with him still. Harcourt's debating power was of the greatest value; Morley was convincing, for he spoke out of deep conviction; Campbell-

<sup>1</sup> Fitzmaurice's *Life of Lord Granville*, ii. 494-5.

<sup>2</sup> *Annual Register*, pp. 239-40.

<sup>3</sup> *The Parnell Movement*, pp. 284-7.



Bannerman was courageous ; Bryce's knowledge of constitutional questions was profound ; Spencer, driven from Coercion by bitter experience of its futility, carried great weight with the electors. But Gladstone himself, like Agamemnon, was king of men. His length of years, the splendour of his public services, the acknowledged supremacy of his talents, his incomparable eloquence, his world-wide knowledge raised him above his contemporaries, and beside him every man looked small. Men thronged to see him and hear him as something to be remembered in after years ; they listened to him when they turned with contempt from the ablest of his contemporaries ; they were fascinated by the man whom they considered, and with justice, the greatest ornament of their race. As he passed through the streets of Edinburgh or Glasgow, of Manchester or Liverpool, his progress was that of a conqueror. Nor had he any difficulty in dealing with the arguments of his opponents. In answer to the charge of Catholic bigotry, he pointed to Ireland under a Protestant leader, and reminded his hearers that every Irish Parliamentary leader had been a Protestant except O'Connell. To the demand that Ulster should have a separate legislative assembly, he pointed out that the ablest and the most trusted of the Ulster leaders, Major Saunderson, made no such claim. The objection that an Irish Parliament might endow the Catholic religion he met by pointing out that such was specially prohibited in his Home Rule Bill. He recalled how the Union was passed and what evils had followed, contrasting the poverty and discontent after 1800 with the progress and prosperity under Grattan's Parliament. He dealt effectively with Mr. Chamberlain's changing plans, his Federation Scheme, his Canadian Home Rule, his Provincial Councils, with his croaking prophecies and perverted history ; and he often reminded his audience that the Tory alternative to Home Rule was twenty years of Coercion.<sup>1</sup> Finally, he refused to call the Liberal deserters Liberal Unionists, as they wished,

<sup>1</sup> *Speeches at Edinburgh and Glasgow* — pamphlets published by National Press Agency.

but called them instead Dissident Liberals, though the name Liberal Unionist was the more usual one used by the public.

To meet the objections of those who were genuine Home Rulers but who objected to his Home Rule Bill, Mr. Gladstone was willing to concede something. But he obstinately clung to the clause excluding the Irish members from Westminster, and thus gave his critics some reason to say that Imperial unity was sacrificed. He also clung to the Land Bill, or at least showed no readiness to drop it, though it was disliked on every side. And there is no doubt that his obstinacy on these points lost him votes. There were Liberal voters also chagrined with the Irish for having so recently allied themselves with Tories and attacked the Liberals. And there were Liberal voters who thought that Home Rule was sprung upon them, who had not therefore time to understand the question, and who were not prepared to vote for it till they did. It was these timid and unconvinced voters who lost the election, for Mr. Gladstone was defeated chiefly by Liberals who abstained from voting. Nor was the defeat very decisive if we regard the number of votes polled rather than the number of members returned. In the constituencies contested the Unionist vote was 1,316,327, the Liberal 1,238,342, a difference of less than 80,000 out of more than 2,500,000 votes polled. Had the electoral system provided for proportional representation, the number of Unionists returned for these seats would be 209 against 198 Home Rulers, whereas the actual figures were 256 Unionists to 151 on the opposite side. In Ireland the numbers remained the same. Two of the ablest of the Irish party were defeated—Mr. Healy in South Derry, and Mr. O'Brien for South Tyrone—but these losses were counter-balanced by the return of Mr. Justin MacCarthy for the City of Derry and of Mr. Sexton for West Belfast. When the last returns had come in the Tories numbered 316, the Liberal Unionists 74, thus giving a majority of 110 against Home Rule. Mr. Chamberlain's adherents were not more



than 12, the remainder of the Liberal Unionists following the lead of Lord Hartington.<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Parnell urged the defeated Ministers to cling to office on the ground that though Home Rule had been defeated, Liberalism rather than Conservatism had triumphed. But when Parliament met it was certain that an adverse vote on the Irish question would be taken, and then Ministers would have to go. And further, for the Home Rulers to cling to office, after having appealed to the country on a definite policy, and having been defeated, would be unprecedented.<sup>2</sup> Resignation was therefore resolved on, and when Parliament met in August, Lord Salisbury was again Premier; Sir M. Hicks-Beach, Chief Secretary for Ireland; Lord Londonderry, Lord-Lieutenant; Lord Randolph Churchill, Chancellor of the Exchequer and Leader of the House of Commons. Lord Salisbury had urged Hartington to form a Ministry exclusively of Liberal Unionists, or partly of Liberal Unionists and partly of Tories, and in either case had promised to support him. But the Whig Leader thought he could best defeat Home Rule by remaining out of office, and Mr. Chamberlain agreed with him, and was content that henceforth Lord Hartington should be his leader.<sup>3</sup> This was a strange turn of events, remembering that but a short time before Mr. Chamberlain had called Lord Hartington Rip Van Winkle, and Sir Stafford Northcote, the Conservative leader, had called Mr. Chamberlain Jack Cade.

What was to be the Irish policy of the new Government? It could not be Coercion in face of the denunciation of Coercion by so many Unionist candidates during the elections. It could not be Land Purchase in face of the attacks made on Mr. Gladstone's Bill. It was not likely to be any large scheme of local government, for Lord Hartington had as little zeal in that direction as the most reactionary Tory. And it soon

<sup>1</sup> *Annual Register*, p. 255; O'Brien's *Parnell*, ii. 157; Morley's *Gladstone*, ii. 585-6; O'Connor's *Parnell Movement*, p. 287.

<sup>2</sup> Morley, ii. 587.

<sup>3</sup> *Life of Churchill*, ii. 124-6; Jeyes' *Chamberlain*, i. 235-6; *Annual Register*, p. 257.

appeared that there was to be no measure of Land Reform. Irish affairs were then in a critical condition. So far only 90,000 agricultural tenants had been able to go into the Land Courts to avail themselves of the Act of 1881. Nearly as many more, mostly in arrears and therefore at the landlords' mercy, had settled out of Court, and at much less reduction than they would have obtained had they gone into Court. The remainder, numbering nearly 500,000, were in the same position as if the Act of 1881 had never been passed.<sup>1</sup> The prices of agricultural produce had recently fallen from 30 to 40 per cent, and a political economist of great weight, Sir James Caird, had declared publicly that from more than five-sixths of the Irish agriculturist holdings all economic rent had for the present disappeared.<sup>2</sup> In these circumstances Mr. Parnell, in September, introduced an amending Land Bill, providing that leaseholders, specially excluded from the Act of 1881, should now be admitted to its benefits; that judicial rents fixed before 1885 should be revised in the Land Courts, and that all evictions and ejectment processes should be stayed on payment of half the rent and arrears due, and until the inability of the tenant to pay was investigated in the Courts. Mr. Gladstone and the bulk of the Liberals supported the Bill. But the Government opposed it, denying Mr. Parnell's figures, and sceptical as to any fall in prices; and the Chief Secretary described Mr. Parnell's Bill as "an act of gross injustice and confiscation to the landlords of Ireland."<sup>3</sup> He could not, however, deny that the Irish tenants were not paying their rents, nor that the landlords were evicting them; nor could he deny that Kerry was overrun with Moonlighters and stained by crime, and that there was danger of other counties in a short time being similarly disturbed. All the Government did was to appoint a commission, under Lord Cowper as chairman, to inquire into the working of the Irish Land Acts, and another to inquire into the question of Irish industrial development, and further to promise Ireland a measure of local government

<sup>1</sup> T. M. Healy in *Contemporary Review*, January 1887.

<sup>2</sup> *Annual Register*, pp. 135-7.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 278-83.



similar to those which were to be given to England and Scotland. Lord Randolph Churchill declared that in dealing with the three countries in this matter the Government policy was to be marked by "equality, similarity and simultaneity."<sup>1</sup> The Government were determined, above all, to maintain the Union and resist Home Rule, and Sir R. Hamilton, the Home Rule Under-Secretary for Ireland, was removed from his position.<sup>2</sup> At the same time, anxious to stay evictions and prevent a recrudescence of agrarian agitation, the Government sent General Buller to Kerry. He was armed with extraordinary powers, and was soon interviewing Moonlighters and evicted tenants, and threatening landlords who were unreasonable and wanted to evict that they could not rely on having the forces of the Crown. This was called pressure within the law. But men like the Marquis of Clanricarde refused to submit to any such pressure, and the Government, charged with claiming a power of dispensing from the law, repudiated making any such claim, and henceforth Clanricarde and his fellow-landlords had police and military placed at their disposal.<sup>3</sup>

This was the state of things in October, but it was sure to be worse when the November rents became due, for then there would be more rents to be paid and more tenants unable to pay. Still Mr. Parnell was for peace and patience. At the worst Lord Cowper's Commission would soon report, and its report could not be ignored by the Government. Mr. Parnell had set his heart on getting Home Rule. Scotland by three to two had declared for it, Wales by five to one, and England, he believed, would come round in time. But if agitation and outrage commenced in Ireland, the Liberals would be embarrassed, the Liberal Unionists repelled, and in England the cry for Home Rule would be drowned in the much louder cry for Coercion. Parnell wanted the Unionists to proceed to legislation. Lord Randolph Churchill's programme of agricultural allotments and reduction of railway rates and taxation would be sure to irritate the old-fashioned Tories; his ideas on

<sup>1</sup> *Churchill's Life*, ii. 138-40, 163-5.

<sup>2</sup> *Annual Register*, p. 293.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 294, 311.

local government were much nearer the ideas of Mr. Chamberlain than those of Lord Hartington or Lord Salisbury, and Mr. Parnell's hopes were that in these legislative proposals lay the germs of serious differences, and that probably the Union of the Unionists would soon be dissolved. But some of Mr. Parnell's chief lieutenants were not willing to be patient. They were not willing to wait on the convenience of a Unionist Government, and stand aside while Irish tenants were driven from their homes. Nor indeed did they wish that the Unionists could claim the credit of settling the Irish Land question. And hence, in the end of October, the "Plan of Campaign" was formulated. Mr. Harrington, the Secretary of the National League and member for Westmeath, was its author; its two chief advocates were Messrs. Dillon and O'Brien.<sup>1</sup>

It was not a No-Rent movement, nor was it intended to be put in force when landlords were reasonable and tenants able to pay. But when the rents were obviously too high, and such as could not be paid in full, the tenants adopting the Plan were to meet and agree on the reduction they were to demand from their landlord. If he refused their demand they paid him nothing, elected a managing committee from among themselves—the priest being a member if willing to act—paid the reduced rent to this committee, and then fought the landlord with the money thus lodged. This was called the Estate Fund, and was to be supplemented by grants from the National League Funds. No tenant adopting the Plan was to make terms with the landlord, except with the consent of his fellows, nor hold any communication with him, and each individual should always abide by the decision of the majority. Campaign tenants who were evicted were to be supported out of the Estate Fund. In addition to this, every obstacle was to be thrown in the way of evicting landlords. No evicted farm was to be taken, no stock seized for rent to be purchased, and if in asserting his legal rights the landlord broke the law, he was to be brought into Court to answer for his misdeeds.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Healy, *Why Ireland is not Free*, p. 18.

<sup>2</sup> *Annual Register*, pp. 312-15.



Mr. Parnell was then seriously unwell—so unwell that when Mr. O'Brien went to London to consult him he was unable to see him. He subsequently complained that he had not been consulted, and it was indeed strange that the party, as a whole, had not been taken into counsel before so grave a step was taken. From the beginning Mr. Parnell was opposed to the Plan. For one thing, he considered it a violation of the Kilmainham Treaty, under which, on obtaining Liberal support, he was to slow down the agitation.<sup>1</sup> In public, Mr. Morley thought it best to express no opinion, but in private he told Mr. Parnell that the effect of the Plan in England was "wholly bad."<sup>2</sup> Mr. Gladstone's opinion coincided with that of Mr. Morley, but he blamed the Government even more than he blamed Messrs. Dillon and O'Brien.<sup>3</sup> Mr. Davitt, at the solicitation of Mr. Parnell, had nothing to do with the Plan, and evidently did not approve of it.<sup>4</sup> As for the Tories and Liberal Unionists, they fiercely assailed it and its authors; however much they might differ on other subjects, on this they were at one. But while the Plan had, from the Irish point of view, the unfortunate effect of closing the Unionist ranks, it cannot be denied that it proved a powerful weapon on the tenants' side, and had in the great majority of cases in which it was adopted the effect of bringing the landlords to reason. And it is certain also that many exacting landlords, fearing the Plan might be adopted by their tenants, hauled down their flag of defiance. The Government, finding their landlord friends were being worsted and their enemies triumphant, struck back, and in December Messrs. Dillon and O'Brien were prosecuted. Mr. Dillon gave bail, but continued his Campaign operations.<sup>5</sup> In the new year as in the old the fight went on; the landlords shrieked for Coercion; the cry was taken up in England, and grew in volume; and when Parliament opened in February, the Queen's Speech announced that a Coercion Bill would be introduced.

<sup>1</sup> O'Brien's *Parnell*, ii. 170-74.

<sup>2</sup> *Annual Register*, p. 297; *Life of Gladstone*, ii. 610.

<sup>3</sup> *Life of Gladstone*, ii. 611-12.      <sup>4</sup> *Fall of Feudalism*, pp. 514-20.

<sup>5</sup> *Annual Register*, p. 319.

But meanwhile the Unionist Government had passed through a severe ordeal. In the last days of the year, without consultation with his political or personal friends, Lord Randolph Churchill resigned his position as Chancellor of the Exchequer. He found fault with the Army and Navy estimates; but the fact was he was out of touch with his colleagues on many matters of policy, being much more of a Radical than a Tory. By sheer audacity and force of character he had led his party far towards Liberal reforms, and had no doubt they would continue to submit themselves to his guidance. He believed himself necessary to the life of the Government, and tendered his resignation, confident that it would not be accepted and that henceforth his position would be stronger than ever. But Lord Salisbury and his colleagues had had enough of Liberal programmes, and had long enough submitted to a Radical in the garb of a Tory. Much, therefore, to Lord Randolph's astonishment, Lord Salisbury accepted his resignation. Mr. Goschen from the Liberal-Unionist side became Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Mr. W. H. Smith became Leader of the House of Commons.<sup>1</sup>

To Mr. Chamberlain this turn of affairs was not welcome. A Unionist Government without Lord Randolph Churchill, he thought, was not likely to hold together, and at best would be more Tory than Liberal, and therefore less deserving of his support. In this frame of mind he spoke at Birmingham, eulogizing the retiring Minister, and at the same time expressing his own anxiety for the reunion of the Liberal party. He could not see why the divided Liberals should continue their quarrels. Mr. Gladstone had formally abandoned his Irish Land Purchase Bill, which had proved a stumbling-block to many;<sup>2</sup> and as for himself, he fully agreed with his late colleagues as to the urgency of English and Scotch reforms. He was, further, in favour of a large measure of local government for Ireland, and of settling the Irish Land question without, however, burdening the British taxpayer, and he urged that

<sup>1</sup> *Annual Register*, pp. 304-5; *Churchill's Life*, ii. 230-40, 43-48.

<sup>2</sup> *Annual Register*, pp. 272-4.



Home Rule might wait a little, at least until it was better understood. Nor could he see why a few representative Liberals from both sides, sitting round a table in friendly conference, could not bridge over the differences which kept them asunder.

One of the most prominent and influential of the Radical members, Mr. Labouchere, scoffed at Mr. Chamberlain's overtures as worthless and insincere.<sup>1</sup> But Mr. Gladstone thought them worth considering, and in January what came to be called The Round Table Conference held its first sitting at the house of Sir William Harcourt. Mr. Chamberlain and Sir George (lately Mr.) Trevelyan were on one side, Sir William Harcourt and Mr. Morley on the other, with Lord Herschell, the late Liberal Lord Chancellor, in the chair. Lord Hartington was not represented, nor did he approve of the Conference at all. Several meetings were held, much good feeling displayed, many difficulties got over, many points of argument arrived at, and it seemed as if warring brothers were to lay their enmities aside and clasp hands in unity and peace. But suddenly and unexpectedly Mr. Chamberlain wrote an article in a Baptist newspaper attacking the Irish members of Parliament. He protested against the Scotch crofter, the English agricultural labourer, and the Welsh Dissenter being neglected for three millions of disloyal Irishmen, and because eighty delegates representing the policy and receiving the pay of the Chicago Convention were determined to obstruct all business until their demands had been conceded.<sup>2</sup> This was war rather than peace, and the Conference broke up never to meet again. A few months later Sir George Trevelyan abandoned Unionism and came back to his old friends. But Mr. Chamberlain drifted further and further away from Liberalism, and when the Unionists brought in a Coercion Bill for Ireland he was found among its supporters and its champions.

It was introduced in the end of March. Earlier in the month Sir M. Hicks-Beach had resigned the office of Chief

<sup>1</sup> *Annual Register*, pp. 304-5.

<sup>2</sup> Morley's *Gladstone*, ii. 607-8.

Secretary owing to ill-health. His place was taken by Mr. Arthur Balfour, nephew of Lord Salisbury, and it was the new Chief Secretary who took charge of the Coercion Bill. Mr. Balfour had been a member of the Fourth Party, and as such had first come into notice. He was a young man, scholarly, cultured, an author, a philosopher, somewhat of a sceptic, of agreeable manners and fine literary tastes. He was not the stamp of man whom the public would expect to play successfully the rôle of a militant politician. But Mr. Balfour soon showed unexpected capacity for political work. His courage, his resource, his readiness of reply, the quickness with which he seized upon the weak points in his opponents' case, the skill with which he extricated himself out of difficulties or defended an untenable position, astonished both friend and foe. Yet great as his powers were, they were severely taxed to defend the Coercion Bill and ensure its passage through Parliament. Since the Union it was the eighty-seventh Coercion Bill, and Mr. Gladstone described it as the worst of them all. Like its predecessors, it gave the Lord-Lieutenant power to proclaim associations, to suppress newspapers, to disperse meetings by force, to quarter extra police in proclaimed districts at the expense of the inhabitants. But, in addition, it enormously increased the summary jurisdiction of resident magistrates; it provided for the arrest of accused persons in England, and for their trial in London if necessary; and the Act was to be perpetual. It required no small courage to carry such a measure in face of such critics as the Irish Party and Mr. Gladstone, or to justify it to Unionist members who but twelve months before had indignantly repudiated Coercion as an alternative to Home Rule.<sup>1</sup> But Mr. Balfour undertook the task. Relying on the returns made by the Irish Constabulary, the charges of Irish judges at Assizes, on strong articles in Nationalist newspapers, on the violent speeches of irresponsible orators, he drew a lurid picture of Ireland. Terror of the National League was everywhere. The law of the land was paralyzed. Men were afraid to give evidence in Law Courts,

<sup>1</sup> *Parnell Movement*, pp. 286-7.



afraid to act as jurors, afraid to give a verdict according to their oaths. Men were cruelly boycotted for doing what the law allowed ; nearly 1000 persons were under police protection ; and all this was done by the National League and the Nationalist Party, supported by dynamite and dagger and American gold.<sup>1</sup>

Asked for particulars as to persons under the ban of the National League, Mr. Balfour was not communicative, taking shelter under the plea of official secrecy. When he did give particulars he was frequently exposed. He described how a Catholic farmer named Clarke, who had obtained money under false pretences, had escaped conviction at the hands of a jury of Catholic farmers, though the case was proved against him. But the fact was that Clarke was neither a Catholic nor a farmer. He described how a man named Hogan, accused of an outrage on a girl, had been similarly acquitted. But it was found that the girl herself was a consenting party, and therefore the jury refused to convict. A third case was that of a Moonlighter from Kerry, also acquitted. But Mr. Harrington, who had acted as counsel in the case, was able to say that the judge disbelieved the charge and directed the acquittal of the prisoner. Mr. Balfour gave the names of two branches of the League which had passed resolutions calling for the boycotting of all those who refused to join the League. From Mr. Parnell and from Mr. Harrington came the reply that one of the branches had been dissolved by the Central Branch, and in the other case the local committee had been called on to resign. As to the charges of judges, no one who knew anything about Ireland attached any importance to them. Promotion to the Irish bench comes as a reward for political services, and the promoted lawyer is as much a partisan on the bench as he had been at the Bar.<sup>2</sup>

These exposures were damaging, and so also was the report of Lord Cowper's Commission, which found that there had been a considerable fall in agricultural prices.<sup>3</sup> Sir

<sup>1</sup> *Annual Register*, pp. 88-93.

<sup>2</sup> *Parnell Movement*, pp. 291-4.

<sup>3</sup> *Annual Register*, p. 94.

Redvers Buller, who gave evidence, swore that in Ireland the law was on the side of the rich. Further, it was notorious that wherever the Plan of Campaign had been adopted there was no agrarian crime ; and all through the winter and spring Sir M. Hicks-Beach had been bringing pressure to bear on landlords. Yet the arguments founded on all these facts, even when put forth with all the authority and eloquence of Mr. Gladstone, failed to make any impression on the Unionists. They swallowed the pledges they had made the previous year against Coercion and voted for the closure, so as to facilitate the passage of Mr. Balfour's Bill. Liberals and Irish opposed the measure with determination ; but the unsparing use of the closure, backed up by obedient majorities, made all opposition futile, and at last Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Parnell and their followers left the House of Commons. The Bill was then rushed through, and in the end of July became law.<sup>1</sup>

Many Unionists declared that they could not support Coercion if a Land Bill were not also introduced ; and to satisfy these, and carry out the recommendations of Lord Cowper's Commission, a Land Bill was introduced, and in August became law. Under pressure from Mr. Chamberlain and Lord Randolph Churchill, it was improved in its passage through the House of Commons, and in its final shape it admitted leaseholders to the benefits of the 1881 Land Act, and provided for a revision of judicial rents. Had all this been done twelve months before, Mr. Parnell would have been satisfied, and there would have been no Plan of Campaign, and need have been no Coercion Act. But concessions to Ireland have always been too late, and this one, accompanied by a drastic Coercion Act, was received with no gratitude in Ireland.

The year 1887 was a year of Jubilee in England. The Queen was then fifty years on her throne. The vast extent of territory which she inherited had been still further increased during her reign. In Australia and in America were self-governing and prosperous colonies, their institutions modelled on those of England, their loyalty to her strengthened by the

<sup>1</sup> *Annual Register*, pp. 96-99, 105, 109 *et seq*



freedom which they enjoyed. A mighty and ever-growing empire in Africa, and in Asia the teeming millions of India, alike owned England's sway. Her army scattered over the earth manned her fortresses, her navy ruled the seas, and in every trading port ships were found with the English flag at their mast-heads. Not often in human history were there such scenes as were presented in the streets of London and in Westminster Abbey on the 21st of June. Seated in the famous church to give thanks to God for the length of her reign, the Queen was surrounded by a crowd of princes of her own blood. Kings had come from afar to do her honour, from the various countries of Europe, from Persia and China and Japan; dusky princes there were from India arrayed in glittering jewels, officers in varied uniforms, judges in scarlet and ermine, ambassadors in brilliant attire, peers in their robes, ladies with flashing diamonds, all these were gathered together. The houses and streets along the route from Buckingham Palace were a mass of decorations; and when darkness came, the illuminations everywhere turned night into day in this the richest capital of the universe. And in great cities far away the fêtes and gaiety of London were imitated.<sup>1</sup> Ireland alone took no part in these celebrations, but, sullen and discontented, kept sorrowfully apart. Her prosperity had not grown with the prosperity of England; her liberties had not been extended like those of so many British Colonies; a Coercion Act was then passing through Parliament giving to Ireland a new supply of scourges and chains; and Ireland had not therefore any Jubilee offering to make but her poverty and her tears.

In August the Irish National League was proclaimed under the new Coercion Act, and the struggle between Mr. Balfour and the Irish leaders began. It was long and bitter. Every National League branch in the country was forthwith attacked. Its meetings were broken up by police, its rooms or offices invaded, its papers and books seized, and the newspapers which published its resolutions were prosecuted and their editors

<sup>1</sup> *Annual Register*, pp. 138-42; MacCarthy's *History of Our Own Times*, iii. 333-6; *Times* Report.

imprisoned. Resident magistrates filled with landlord prejudice inflicted severe sentences on those who attended public meetings ; nor was any distinction made between them and ordinary prisoners ; and members of Parliament and newspaper editors were obliged to mix with thieves, to wear the same dress and do the same work and eat the same food. Police and military were drafted round the country at great public expense, and such was the reckless audacity of some of their officers that a certain Captain Plunkett ordered his men "not to hesitate to shoot." The result was many collisions between people and police, and consequent loss of life. At Youghal a young man was stabbed to death by a policeman ; at Fermoy the police beat a man to death ; at Tipperary a man was shot by a policeman who was believed to be intoxicated ; at Timoleague the police fired on a crowd, killing a man ; at Gweedore a police-inspector was killed ; and a head constable was killed in Clare.<sup>1</sup> A small boy was imprisoned for smiling sarcastically at a policeman ; another for whistling "Harvey Duff" ; a third for cheering for Mr. Gladstone ; and a little girl of twelve was sent to jail for being one of a crowd of persons who obstructed the sheriff's officers when seizing sheep in the interests of a neighbouring landlord.<sup>2</sup>

At Mitchelstown events occurred which attracted world-wide attention. A public meeting consisting of several thousands was held in the Square of the town on the 9th of September 1887, and was addressed by several members of Parliament, English as well as Irish. Mr. Dillon was among the latter. A Government reporter, under police protection, was sent to take down the speeches, and had he come in due time all would have been well, for there had hitherto been no objection to the presence of such a reporter. But he came when the meeting was in progress, accompanied by about twenty policemen, who attempted to force a passage through the dense crowd. This being found impossible, the reporter retired, and soon reappeared accompanied by a greatly increased force of police. Confident in their strength and in their arms, these police handled the crowd roughly ; the crowd retorted

<sup>1</sup> *Annual Register*, p. 200.

<sup>2</sup> Davitt's *Fall of Feudalism*, pp. 523-6.



with their sticks; the police fled to the barracks, and no sooner had they got within shelter than they opened fire on the people, killing three men. The enraged thousands rushed on the barracks and would have wrecked it, and probably sacrificed the lives of the police, had not Mr. Dillon and the priests present intervened. A coroner's inquest returned a verdict of wilful murder against the county inspector and three of the policemen; and from the evidence given, it was quite plain that the police were entirely to blame. But no action was taken by the Government. In England Mr. Gladstone attacked both police and Government with vigour. Mr. Balfour replied with sneers and sarcasm, and emphatically denied that the police were in any way to blame.<sup>1</sup>

This indeed was his usual custom. He could give no credit for honesty or good intentions to his opponents; they were law-breakers and must be put down. On the other hand, no Government official, high or low, could do wrong. The judge who, forgetting the ermine he wore, spoke like a Crown prosecutor was impartial. The magistrate who inflicted a savage sentence on a member of Parliament was merely doing his duty. The police-officer who gave a reckless order resulting in riot and bloodshed was a conscientious official. The policeman who used his baton freely on the heads of inoffensive people was zealous to do his work, and deserved the favourable notice of his superior officers. Finally, the Attorney-General, a Catholic himself, who refused to believe Catholics on their oaths, and allowed none to serve on juries, was in high favour with Mr. Balfour. Bishops, priests, and representative laymen united in protesting against this insult done to their religion, but they protested in vain.<sup>2</sup> Jury-packing continued, and the Attorney-General in question, whose name was Peter O'Brien, was nicknamed in Nationalist newspapers "Peter the Packer." Mr. Balfour retorted by praising Mr. O'Brien, and when a vacancy arose on the judicial bench, the unpopular law officer became Lord Chief Justice of Ireland.

<sup>1</sup> *Annual Register*, pp. 198-200.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Counsel's *Pamphlet on Jury-packing*. Dublin, 1887.

Yet this unsparing use of Coercion and the unstinted praise of all its most unscrupulous agents did not still the Irish storm; and Mr. Balfour, feeling baffled and worsted in the struggle, besought the aid of His Holiness the Pope. Two priests had already been imprisoned, Canon Keller of Youghal and Father Ryan of Tipperary. Others attended public meetings and made speeches, and were in sympathy with the National League, and in some cases with the Plan of Campaign. Shocked at such conduct, the British Government asked the Pope to interfere and compel these Christian ministers to desist from encouraging disorder and illegality. But the Pope, not willing to act precipitately, despatched a high ecclesiastic—Monsignor Persico—to Ireland to inquire on the spot. From the first Monsignor Persico was regarded by the Irish Nationalists with distrust. The distrust was deepened when he was seen visiting the houses of Catholics who were landlords and Unionists. And when in April 1888 a Papal Rescript was published condemning the Plan of Campaign and boycotting, there was strong language used at Irish public meetings against Pope and Papal Envoy. The days of O'Connell and the Veto were recalled. Mr. Parnell described the Rescript as an attempt by the Pope to control the political situation in Ireland by right of his supreme spiritual authority. The Irish Catholic members of Parliament, while freely acknowledging the Pope's right to their obedience in spiritual matters, repudiated him as a political guide. And they pointed out the insufficiency of the reasons given in the Rescript. It was declared that tenants entered freely into contracts with their landlords; that the Land Courts were open to them; that funds collected under the Plan of Campaign had been extorted from the tenants; that boycotting was against charity and justice. Mr. Dillon and others answered that it was notorious that contracts between landlords and tenants were not free, but that tenants were at the landlords' mercy; that Courts manned by landlords and agents were not impartial tribunals, and in any case were useless to tenants burdened with arrears; that in no case had the Plan been forced on tenants; and if



boycotting and intimidation were not unknown in the Irish agrarian movement, it was the only way in which poverty-stricken tenants could defend themselves. What irritated the Irish Catholics most was that the Pope seemed to have ignored the information obtained from the Irish Bishops. And it annoyed them to see the Orange orators, who so often cursed the Pope, now praise him and point the finger of scorn at these wicked Catholic politicians who received and deserved the censure of the Head of their Church.<sup>1</sup>

To Monsignor Persico grave injustice was done. His private letters have since been made public, and show him to have had profound admiration for the Irish Catholics, and to have been completely in sympathy with Irish National aspirations; and he felt pained that he should be considered an enemy to Ireland.<sup>2</sup> Not then by him, but probably by some high-placed Englishman—speaking in the name of his Government—had Ireland been attacked. The Pope had great admiration for England, whose fair-play towards Catholics was in such striking contrast to that of the so-called Catholic Government of France. He was an old diplomatist and an able one, and if he could accede to the wishes of the British representatives, it would surely be of service to the millions of Catholics scattered throughout the British Empire. And he felt he could do this without injury to Ireland, for it was not the Irish National movement but its excesses he condemned. Nor could it be denied that in isolated cases intimidation and boycotting had been needlessly used. Even as a means of bringing about reform, it is at least doubtful if the Plan of Campaign was the best weapon that could be devised. A plan under which the tenants would contribute to an insurance fund, enabling them to fight the landlords and sustain the evicted, and expose to the world the iniquities of landlordism, would have probably succeeded as well; and such a plan would have broken no law and invited no moral reprobation. But the Plan of Campaign, initiated by individuals and not by the National Party, could

<sup>1</sup> *Annual Register*, pp. 235-6.

<sup>2</sup> Letters published in *United Irishman*.

not attain and did not attain the strength of a National movement, and was publicly disavowed by Mr. Parnell.<sup>1</sup> It brought on the Jubilee Coercion Act, embarrassed Mr. Gladstone and the English Liberals, and cemented the Union of his political opponents. Caused by the refusal of a Tory Government to do justice in 1886, it was in part justified by the Land Act of the following year. But nothing could excuse the folly of putting it in force, in the case of a prosperous town, with the consequent ruin which followed.<sup>2</sup> Certainly the Plan had its victories, and in 1888 its terms were accepted on no less than thirty-seven estates ; which means that the landlords had been reduced to reason and the tenants had been protected from injustice.<sup>3</sup> These victories were duly published. But the defeats of the Plan were also apparent ; in the imprisonment of so many members of Parliament and others ; in the number of evicted tenants who for twenty years weighed like lead on the Irish National movement ; in the broken hearts of so many who died in poverty and exile ; in the ruined houses of Woodford and Luggacurran and in the grass-grown streets of Tipperary.

In the midst of much talk about the Plan of Campaign, and of its good and evil effects, the Coercion struggle in Ireland went steadily on. Newspapers were suppressed, editors imprisoned, meetings proclaimed, meetings held in spite of proclamations, conflicts between people and police, members of Parliament of such standing and character as Messrs. Dillon, O'Brien and T. D. Sullivan thrown into jail,<sup>4</sup> and a well-known and much-respected Munsterman, Mr. John Mandeville, tortured in prison until he died.<sup>5</sup> One result of all this was that the Liberals and Irish Nationalists came closer together. Prominent English politicians like Lord Ripon and Mr. Morley came to Ireland and made speeches ; Mr. Labouchere was present at Mitchelstown when the three men were shot by the police ; Mr. Shaw-Lefevre, M.P., visited Woodford ; Mr. Blunt

<sup>1</sup> *Annual Register*, 1888, pp. 109-10.

<sup>2</sup> Davitt, pp. 521-2.

<sup>3</sup> *Annual Register*, p. 235.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 1887, p. 201 ; T. D. Sullivan's *Recollections of Troubled Times in Irish Politics*, pp. 236-41.

<sup>5</sup> *Annual Register*, 1888, pp. 238-9.



spent two months in an Irish prison; and Mr. Conybeare, M.P., three months. Deputations from Liberal Associations saw evictions and Coercion trials; and English reporters wrote in the newspapers, and from personal knowledge, of the grinding injustice of Irish landlords and of the miseries of the Irish poor. Nor was any speaker at English elections listened to with greater respect than Irish members of Parliament, and none received a heartier greeting. The arguments of Lord Hartington and Mr. Goschen, Mr. Chamberlain and Mr. Balfour were answered by such able men as Sir William Harcourt, Mr. Morley and Sir George Trevelyan. But Mr. Gladstone was active and effective above them all. He watched the debates in Parliament, he wrote articles for reviews, he received deputations, he spoke to thousands from platforms, and everywhere Ireland was his theme. He dwelt with special emphasis on the character of Mr. Balfour's coercion régime. He denounced the conduct of the police and military at Ennis;<sup>1</sup> and he bade his audience remember Mitchelstown;<sup>2</sup> and the cry was taken up and re-echoed from a hundred platforms. He complained that within little more than a year from the passing of the Coercion Act, 21 out of the 85 Irish Nationalist members had been imprisoned, and that they had been treated like felons—"a shameful, an inhuman, a brutal proceeding."<sup>3</sup> He spoke with scathing severity of the way in which Mr. Mandeville had been done to death, and boldly asserted that the Irish prisons were no better than those of Naples in the days of King Bomba.<sup>4</sup>

To all these charges Mr. Balfour made no serious reply; all he could say was that Mr. Gladstone himself had passed Coercion Acts, and that the Jubilee Coercion Act was not more severe.<sup>5</sup> His speeches were those of a sophist rather than of a statesman. He had no anxiety to remove the causes of Irish discontent, no apology for all his severity, no

<sup>1</sup> *Annual Register*, 1887, pp. 169-70.    <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 1887, pp. 159-61.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 1888, pp. 155, 158.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 1888, pp. 155-60, 163; Morley, ii. 618-23.

<sup>5</sup> *Annual Register*, 1887, pp. 174-5, 185-6; 1888, pp. 119-22.

word of censure for over-zealous subordinates, no expression of regret for the death of Mr. Mandeville. He appeared to be satisfied, and to think his work done if in Parliament or on the platform he gained over Mr. Gladstone some barren dialectical victory. In the session of 1888 his Government extended the Ashbourne Act by voting an additional sum of £5,000,000; but beyond this nothing was to be done. Anti-Irish prejudice in England was of ancient growth and not easily removed, but Mr. Balfour's speeches were not satisfying the public, and by the end of 1888 the Unionists had begun to lose ground. Public opinion was still further influenced by events which occurred early in the new year; and from the end of 1889 Mr. Gladstone could claim, with truth, that he had with him the flowing tide.

At the election of 1886 a recently formed Association, the Irish Loyal and Patriotic Union, had been especially active. Freely sustained by wealth and privilege on both sides of the Channel, by class and the dependents of class, it appealed to bigotry and race hatred, to ascendancy and distrust of the people, and had for its main end and object to defeat Mr. Gladstone's policy of Home Rule. Its Secretary was a young Irish barrister named Houston, who certainly showed no lack of zeal in the work set him to do. During the year 1886, from the printing press under his control, he had published and circulated over eleven millions of leaflets. Most of these were issued at election times. There were also pamphlets, "murder maps," showing the connexion between the Land League and National League and crimes of the worst kind; extracts from Nationalist speeches; and there were 100,000 wall-posters issued.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Houston had also sent fifty-five speakers to England and Wales. They were not scrupulous as to the statements they made, and freely attacked the Irish members of Parliament as they grossly exaggerated every outrage in Ireland, and painted in vivid colours the sufferings of loyal and law-abiding Irishmen at the hands of lawless leagues. In this work of defamation Mr. Houston

<sup>1</sup> Davitt's *Fall of Feudalism*, pp. 500-501.



found a zealous co-operator in the *London Times*. Its great and far-reaching influence, its enormous literary capacity had ever been thrown into the scale against Ireland. It had attacked O'Connell, it had attacked John MacHale, it had called the Irish priests surpliced ruffians, it had gloated over the decimation of the Irish masses by famine and emigration, and now it assailed Parnell and the movement with which he was identified with a vigour and venom which recalled the days of O'Connell.<sup>1</sup>

Yet the joint efforts of the Irish Loyal and Patriotic Union—the I.L.P.U. as it was called for brevity—and the *Times* were not so successful at the General Elections of 1886 as they would have wished. The shifting of 100,000 votes would have meant a great Home Rule victory instead of a great defeat. Time was on the side of Mr. Gladstone, and it looked as if, under the magic of his eloquence, the next election would reverse the verdict of its predecessor. But if Parnell and his party could be shown to be criminals and traitors, in league with assassins and approving of murder, English prejudice would be roused, and all Mr. Gladstone's eloquence would be in vain. With this object Houston sought the aid of a disreputable Irishman named Richard Pigott. He was needy and unprincipled, the former proprietor of two Fenian newspapers, the *Irishman* and *The Flag of Ireland*. Houston had been a Dublin reporter, and must have well known of Pigott's lack of principle and money. Nor had he any difficulty in getting him for the sum of £60 to write in 1885 a pamphlet called *Parnellism Unmasked*.<sup>2</sup> But it contained nothing new—nothing but those vague charges against the Irish leaders which had been already repeated many times on Unionist platforms in Great Britain. What was required was documentary evidence, such as would bring home the guilt of crime to Mr. Parnell and his friends, and blast their reputations before the world. If Pigott could get such documents as these he would be well paid, and while

<sup>1</sup> *Russell's Speech at Parnell Commission*, pp. 5-8.

<sup>2</sup> *Davitt's Speech at "Times" Commission*, p. 331.

searching for them he would have a guinea a day and travelling expenses. To a man steeped in debt this was as food to the hungry, as water to the man dying of thirst. Pigott undertook to procure the required documents, and for a time spent the time pleasantly travelling from Ireland to Paris, from Paris to Lausanne, and putting up at the best hotels as he travelled. In the end of 1886 he had his first batch of letters, and in 1888 he had procured two further batches.<sup>1</sup> Houston bought them all, and then sold them for £2500 to the *Times*.

Relying on the first batch of letters, the *Times* then proceeded to publish a series of articles in the spring of 1887 under the heading "Parnellism and Crime." On the 18th of April, the very day on which the second reading of the Coercion Bill was to be taken, it went further, and published what became afterwards known as the Facsimile Letter. It was as follows:—

15/5/82.

DEAR SIR—I am not surprised at your friend's anger, but he and you should know that to denounce the murders was the only course open to us. To do that promptly was our best policy. But you can tell him and all others concerned that though I regret the accident to Lord F. Cavendish, I can't refuse to admit that Burke got no more than his deserts.—Yours very truly,

CHAS. S. PARNELL.<sup>2</sup>

The date given was but nine days after the Phoenix Park murders, and the meaning was that Mr. Parnell was apologizing to some confederate for having denounced the murders as he had done. If the letter was genuine, Parnell was both a criminal and a hypocrite. In the Liberal camp there was a feeling of dismay. It was well known that Parnell did not love England; he had certainly met Fenians and got subscriptions from them and had some old Fenians in his party; and might it not be that the letter was genuine? It was, further, almost impossible that a great journal like the *Times*, the first newspaper in the world, would be so duped.

<sup>1</sup> *Russell's Speech*, pp. 530-33.

<sup>2</sup> *Annual Register*, pp. 99-100.



In the House of Commons Mr. Parnell, of course, denied having written the letter or having any sympathy with the contents. Many plainly disbelieved him. He was told to take proceedings against the *Times*, but he knew the prejudice against him in London, and an adverse verdict would have ruined himself and his movement; while if he had the case tried in Dublin, a verdict in his favour would be discounted in England. For these reasons he watched and waited. And meantime Lord Salisbury described his language of denial in the House of Commons as marked by callousness, "perhaps even by tolerance of murder"; at the same time denouncing Mr. Gladstone for associating with such a man. Lesser men adopted this truculent language. The *Times* continued its articles on "Parnellism and Crime," and fresh letters were bought from Houston and duly appeared. Thinking that he too was aggrieved by the publication of the *Times*, Mr. F. H. O'Donnell, ex-M.P., took an action for libel, but the *Times* pleaded that there was no intention to asperse Mr. O'Donnell's character, and a verdict for the defendants was obtained. It was not, however, said that the Irish members were guiltless, and in point of fact the *Times* continued to assail them.<sup>1</sup>

At last Mr. Parnell's patience was exhausted, and in July 1888 he demanded a Select Committee of the House of Commons to examine into the authenticity of the Facsimile Letter. Instead of this the Government passed an Act constituting a Commission of three Judges to inquire into the "charges and allegations" contained in "Parnellism and Crime." The judges appointed were political partisans; they were to inquire into the whole Irish movement, unlimited as to time; and to take into account what had been the character of Irish government as causing discontent, and therefore predisposing to crime, was placed beyond the scope of the inquiry. Further, the whole matter of the Commission was settled only after Mr. Walter, the proprietor of the *Times*,

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* especially *Times* for the month of June; T. D. Sullivan, pp. 247-8, 251-4.

and Mr. Smith, the Tory leader in the House of Commons, had consulted together, and in the inquiry itself the Attorney-General was leading counsel for the *Times*. Nor was there any desire when the Commission opened its doors in September to come to the letters bought from Pigott. On the contrary, the object seemed to be to make fresh charges against the Irish leader, to fish up from the turbid waters of the past ten years everything that could be fished. As Sir Charles Russell, Mr. Parnell's leading counsel, said, the design was to draw up an indictment against a nation.<sup>1</sup>

Day after day an endless procession of witnesses appeared—priests, peasants, bishops, secretaries of leagues, policemen, magistrates, Crown officials, landlords with a grievance, agents and bailiffs to support their landlords. Peasants came from the hills of Kerry, from the wilds of Connemara, from the mountains of Donegal; and shopkeepers came from the cities and towns; policemen came to whisper into the ears of the *Times*' lawyers secrets that they knew; police magistrates to tell of the disreputable politicians who had been or were still the curse of Ireland. The *Times*' solicitors were allowed to scour the Irish jails and tempt prisoners with money and promises of freedom; and an informer, who had been a member of an American Secret Society, and at the same time in the pay of the British Government, had his story to tell.

Not till February 1889 did Pigott step on to the witness's table, and then under the searching cross-examination of the great Irish lawyer, the whole squalid conspiracy of defamation was laid bare. Contradicting himself, perjuring himself at every turn, sinking deeper and deeper as he proceeded, the wretched agent of Houston, the beads of perspiration standing on his forehead, was indeed a pitiable object. He was at last run to earth. For two days he stood the awful torture, but when his name was called on the third day he did not appear. Confessing that he was the forger of all the letters sold to Houston, he fled the country, and shot himself dead on the

<sup>1</sup> *Russell's Speech*, p. 4.



following day in a hotel at Madrid. His career was one of infamy. As far back as 1881 he had got money from Mr. Forster because he had attacked the Land League, and at the same time asked money of Mr. Egan, the League Treasurer, promising to defend the League; and he had obtained money from Dr. Walsh when President of Maynooth College. After he had forged the Facsimile Letter, but before it appeared, he wrote to Dr. Walsh, then Archbishop of Dublin, warning him that Parnell was to be attacked and that he (Pigott) could save him. The wretched creature had no sense of moral rectitude, and in everything he did he sought for money. And yet Houston and the *Times* were not less but perhaps were even more to blame. Houston got the letters, and blindly accepted Pigott's story that he had got them from a man with a black bag, that the first batch came from one Murphy and the second batch from Tom Brown. With a lawyer's astuteness, however, he destroyed all private letters received from Pigott; and he gave the *Times* no guarantee that the letters delivered to them were genuine. The *Times*, however, had asked no questions, and had greedily accepted the letters, paying for them the sum of £2500, so eager were they to blast the character of their political opponents.<sup>1</sup>

For some months longer the inquiry lasted. Mr. Parnell and many others were examined, and Sir Charles Russell made a great speech lasting for seven days, speaking, as he said, not only as an advocate, but also for the land of his birth. Then, early in 1890, the Judges issued their report. They found that the Irish leaders had not incited, approved of, or condoned murder, nor consorted with Invincibles; but that they had not sufficiently discountenanced disorder and outrage, and that they had even preached intimidation. As if, indeed, the British Parliament had ever conceded anything to Ireland except as the result of disorder and violence.<sup>2</sup> The more disreputable of the Unionists professed to discover in these findings a damaging

<sup>1</sup> O'Brien's *Parnell*, ii. 197-234; Morley, ii. 638-50; *Russell's Speech before Commission*; *Davitt's Speech before Commission*; T. D. Sullivan, pp. 257-62, 271.

<sup>2</sup> *Annual Register*, pp. 35-39.

condemnation of the Irish leaders. But the authenticity of the Facsimile Letter was considered the important question, and inside and outside Parliament the discovery of Pigott's forgeries was regarded by every fair-minded man as a great victory for Home Rule. The *Times* was glad to settle a libel action taken by the Irish Leader by the payment of £5000,<sup>1</sup> and in 1889 and 1890 Parnell was the hero of the hour. In the House of Commons, after the exposure of Pigott, he was greeted by the whole Liberal party with enthusiasm, the members waving their hats.<sup>2</sup> At dinner at the Eighty Club, when he and Lord Spencer publicly shook hands, the members cheered again and again, and when he rose to speak they all sprang to their feet waving their napkins above their heads.

At St. James's Hall, on the same platform with Mr. Morley, he was received "with tremendous enthusiasm."<sup>3</sup> In July he received the freedom of the City of Edinburgh.<sup>4</sup> In November he was the central figure at a great Liberal meeting at Nottingham. The following month he was Mr. Gladstone's guest at Hawarden, whence he drove to a great meeting at Liverpool.<sup>5</sup> And in the new year his popularity remained. The change in public opinion had indeed come, and was reflected in the steady diminution of the Government majority in Parliament, and in their continued losses at by-elections. In 1887, when an amendment to the Address was moved on the Irish question, the Unionist majority was 106. In the next year it fell to 88; in 1889 to 79; and in 1890 to 67.<sup>6</sup> Nothing in the latter year was wanting but a General Election to ensure the return of Mr. Gladstone to power, and with that event the triumph of Home Rule. But once again the fates were unpropitious to Ireland; her bright hopes were not to be realized, and from out the mists and shadows of the immediate future it was defeat rather than victory that loomed.

<sup>1</sup> *Annual Register*, 1890, p. 26.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 74.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* 256-60.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 1889, p. 32.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* 161-4.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 1890, p. 40.



## CHAPTER XVI

### *The Fall of Parnell*

IN the exciting times immediately preceding and immediately following the Phœnix Park murders, Mr. Parnell and Mr. Chamberlain were often in accord on public questions. Both opposed flogging in the army; both disliked Forster and his Coercion régime in Ireland; and both, in 1885, agreed that there should be further concessions to Ireland. Political sympathy often brought them together in social intercourse, and Mr. Chamberlain had therefore many opportunities of estimating the character of the Irish leader. He was, he said, a good business man, a really great man, and especially a great Parliamentarian. But he thought him unsocial, rather dull and uninteresting, with no small talk and poor conversational powers.<sup>1</sup> His estimate was correct. Mr. Parnell had little taste for social intercourse; he was of a rather thoughtful and retiring disposition. He exercised, however, a certain amount of influence over many women with whom he was brought into contact; he was not a misogynist; and—unfortunately for himself and for Ireland—he had other overmastering passions than ambition and pride. His own sister records that, while a young man at Cambridge, he was responsible for the ruin of a trusting girl who lived with her father on the banks of the Cam.<sup>2</sup> At a later period he was fascinated by an American girl, to whom he proposed marriage; but the lady, at first accepting, finally rejected his suit,<sup>3</sup> and subsequently he never at any time till 1891 seriously contemplated marriage.

<sup>1</sup> O'Brien's *Parnell*, ii. 131-2.

<sup>2</sup> Mrs. Dickenson's *A Patriot's Mistake*.

<sup>3</sup> Davitt's *Fall of Feudalism*, pp. 207-8.

Unfortunately, however, he contracted an illicit attachment which had a blighting influence on his career. The lady, who belonged to a distinguished English family, was the wife of an Irishman, Captain O'Shea. In 1880 O'Shea was elected M.P. for Clare, and was one of those who voted for Mr. Parnell as chairman of the Irish Party in preference to Mr. Shaw. Parnell and O'Shea were thus brought together, and thus it was that the former met Mrs. O'Shea. Mastered by a fatal fascination, both fell, and in the years subsequent to 1881 the life of each was a life of sin.

There is deep pathos in the words of Mr. John Parnell as he describes the change which came over his brother. Wearied by exacting public affairs, the Irish leader was wont to rush back from London to Avondale. He loved his beautiful Wicklow home, and in the woods and fields around he shot and fished and rode and talked to the workmen and was happy. Then there was a change. Round Mrs. O'Shea he hovered as the moth does round the candle, and to her home at Eltham he bent his way instead of crossing the sea. And he forgot his duty to Ireland as he forgot Avondale. This is not denied by his able and sympathetic biographer, always anxious as he is to shield Mr. Parnell's memory from reproach. He confesses "frankly and fully" that during the years 1882-1884 "there were weeks and months which he (Parnell) could have spent in Ireland, to the immense advantage of the National movement, but for his unfortunate attachment."<sup>1</sup> The struggle in Ireland was then fierce and bitter, and Mr. Parnell's presence and assistance on many occasions would have given fresh courage to the harassed combatants on the Nationalist side. In Parliament also his constant attendance would have done much. His fighting powers were great, and had he watched and waited in Parliament and struck home at the critical moment, as he alone knew how, the Coercionist Government of Mr. Gladstone would have ended long before the summer of 1885.

As early as 1881 Captain O'Shea's suspicions were aroused. Returning from London to his home at Eltham, he found Mr.

<sup>1</sup> O'Brien's *Parnell*, ii. 165.



Parnell there, and was so enraged that he sent him a challenge. But Mrs. O'Shea's protestations of innocence dispelled her husband's suspicions, and the old cordial relations between the two Irishmen were resumed.<sup>1</sup> In the next year O'Shea was prominent in the negotiations which ended in the Kilmainham Treaty. As a close personal friend of Mr. Chamberlain, he was able to obtain permission to see Mr. Parnell in prison. He had interviews with Mr. Forster, and he corresponded with both Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Chamberlain, the result of all being the political ruin of Forster and the liberation of Parnell. Beyond his share in these events O'Shea's public services were not important. He was but a nominal Home Ruler, unwilling to take the Irish Party pledge, and when the General Election of 1885 came, he disappeared from Parliament. In the next year he reappeared. Mr. T. P. O'Connor had been returned for a division of Liverpool as well as for Galway City, and having elected to sit for Liverpool, Galway became vacant. A capable and strongly supported local candidate came forward in the person of Mr. Lynch. But Mr. Parnell insisted on having Captain O'Shea. Mr. Biggar and Mr. Healy, however, refused to acquiesce in this selection, and went to Galway to support Lynch. They were behind the scenes, and knew that giving Galway to O'Shea was the price paid for Mrs. O'Shea's virtue, and they thought the price paid too high. For Captain O'Shea was not the stamp of man that an Irish Nationalist constituency would care to have as its representative. But Parnell was determined. He came to Galway accompanied by Mr. O'Connor and Mr. Sexton; told the people that the rejection of O'Shea would mean the loss of Home Rule; and told Mr. Biggar and Mr. Healy that he would fight it out at all costs, even if the people of Galway kicked him through the streets. The horror of dissension on the very eve of the introduction of Gladstone's Home Rule Bill silenced opposition. Mr. Biggar was unyielding, but Mr. Healy yielded; Mr. Lynch also withdrew, and Captain O'Shea became M.P. for Galway. His gratitude consisted in following the lead of Mr. Chamberlain, and in

<sup>1</sup> O'Brien's *Parnell*, ii. 162-3.

refusing to vote for the second reading of the Home Rule Bill.<sup>1</sup> At the General Election of 1886 he was not a candidate for any Irish constituency, and did not again sit in Parliament; but in the years that followed he continued to intrigue with Mr. Chamberlain, and finally effected the ruin of Home Rule.

Meanwhile Mr. Parnell continued his relations with Mrs. O'Shea. To be near her he took a house at Eltham; for her sake he neglected his public duties. He seldom appeared in Parliament. In the hard-fought struggle with Mr. Balfour in Ireland he took no part. He found fault with the Plan of Campaign, though he took no pains to devise any better means for protecting the tenants. He grew jealous of Mr. Dillon and Mr. O'Brien, and thought they wished to supplant him; but he forgot that they were left without his guidance, and owed their commanding position to his neglect. Holding aloof from his party, his movements stealthy, his residence unknown, his leadership gradually became a nullity, and in times of stress and difficulty his followers were left to shift for themselves.

The explanation of all this came at last. In December 1889 Captain O'Shea filed a petition for divorce, alleging his wife's adultery with Mr. Parnell. There were adjournments and delays, and not until November of the following year did the case come on. Then the story of Parnell's hidden life was disclosed to an astonished world. It was a shameful story—a story of duplicity and treachery, of the betrayal of friendship, of the violation of vows, of the desecration of home, of the sundering of sacred ties. Not a single gleam of heroism or romance lighted up, even for a moment, the dreary record of unquenchable lust. A man of mature years, a lady well past her prime, had forgotten everything but their own lawless love. Deaf to the call of duty, to the voice of patriotism, to the stern commands of moral obligation, the trusted leader had betrayed his trust; and turning his back on Ireland, sought the unhallowed embraces of one whom even the clinging love of

<sup>1</sup> *Fall of Feudalism*, pp. 501-3; O'Brien's *Parnell*, ii. 122-8; T. D. Sullivan, pp. 191-6.



children was unable to hold back. There was not and could not be any defence in the Divorce Court, and on the 17th of November a decree of dissolution of marriage was issued.

In Ireland both party and people were bewildered. Mr. Parnell's services were great. He had compelled the British Parliament to listen and to concede ; he had wrung from it a Land Act, an Arrears Act, a Franchise Act ; and now a great English party, headed by the greatest statesman of modern times, was pledged to give back to Ireland her Parliament. The man who had humbled the London *Times* in the dust was one of whom the whole Irish race was proud, and in gratitude for what he had done, Irishmen were ready to sustain him even in spite of his moral delinquencies. If they threw him aside division and discord would arise. Parnell was the clamp that held discordant elements together. Peasant and priest, artisan and merchant, Constitutionalist and Fenian had joined hands under his rule, and now if he were repudiated Ireland would become a prey to strife. It would be as if the winds of Æolus were let loose. Old antagonisms would be revived, and the reign of faction would begin. Thus reasoned millions of Irishmen at home and abroad, who knew the blessings of union, and knew what Ireland had suffered from dissension in the past. And there were millions also who believed that Parnell was innocent, and that the divorce case was only a new attempt to blast his reputation. O'Shea was known to be an intriguer in close touch with Chamberlain and the *Times*, Ireland's bitterest enemies, and from these plotters the charges in the Divorce Court came. And if Parnell offered no defence, it was because he was biding his time. He was waiting till his proofs were ready, and then he would overwhelm his enemies as he had overwhelmed Pigott and the *Times*. The Irish Party had no such illusions as these, for they were painfully conscious of Parnell's guilt. But they dreaded what would follow if his guiding hand were removed ; they were only politicians with no authority to decide moral questions, and as politicians they thought it best to stand by their old leader. Hence it was that at a great meeting in the

Leinster Hall, Dublin, they renewed their allegiance to Mr. Parnell.

In the previous September Messrs. Dillon and O'Brien had been prosecuted at Tipperary for inciting Mr. Smith Barry's tenants not to pay rent. They left the country for France, whence they went to America, and in their absence were tried and sentenced to six months' imprisonment.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Harrington, Mr. T. P. O'Connor and Mr. T. D. Sullivan soon joined them in America; and in November all these gentlemen were engaged on behalf of the Irish Party, addressing meetings and obtaining liberal donations for the Irish National cause. Like their brethren at home they resolved to stand by Parnell, and telegraphed to the Leinster Hall meeting that they did so "in the profound conviction that Parnell's statesmanship and matchless qualities as a leader are essential to the safety of our cause." Mr. T. D. Sullivan alone refused to sign the telegram, the reading of which evoked loud cheers in the Leinster Hall. Mr. MacCarthy, at the same meeting, could see no reason why Parnell should not continue to lead the Irish Party and the Irish people to victory. Mr. Healy declared that they were not going to surrender the great chief who had led them so long and so successfully; and he warned off all interfering meddlers by requesting that they were not to speak to the man at the wheel. The *Freeman's Journal* approved of and adopted this language, and to the National League offices in Dublin resolutions of confidence in Parnell from all parts of Ireland came pouring in.<sup>2</sup>

Across the Channel, however, ominous growls were heard. As might have been expected, the *Times* gloated over the disgrace of its great antagonist. The *Standard* scoffed at the notion that such a man should continue to lead any party.<sup>3</sup> The *Daily Telegraph* declared it was in no mood to exult in the disgrace of "a political adversary whose abilities and prowess it was impossible not to respect," but that Parnell

<sup>1</sup> *Annual Register*, pp. 273-5.

<sup>2</sup> O'Brien's *Parnell*, ii. 239-46; T. D. Sullivan, pp. 281-2.

<sup>3</sup> *Annual Register*, p. 232.



should retire, at least for a time.<sup>1</sup> The lesser lights among the Unionist organs followed the lead of the London journals—some with the dignity and self-restraint of the *Daily Telegraph*, and others with the vindictive animosity of the *Times*. On the Liberal side there was greater reluctance to interfere. It was recognized that the Irish had the best right to choose their own leader. But English Dissenters and Scotch Presbyterians had also the right to say that they would no longer co-operate with Parnell. Intolerant of Catholicity the Nonconformists are, but they deeply reverence the sanctity of marriage and the purity of domestic life; and they were shocked at Mr. Parnell's utter disregard of all moral restraint. Mr. Stead emphatically declared that he should go if Home Rule was to be saved. The Rev. Mr. Price Hughes, a distinguished Dissenting clergyman, was even more emphatic and more severe. At a meeting of the National Liberal Federation on the 21st of November the views of Mr. Hughes and Mr. Stead were adopted, and Mr. Morley and Sir William Harcourt, who were present, had to report to Mr. Gladstone that Parnell's leadership had become impossible.<sup>2</sup> Mr. Davitt, taking the same view as Mr. Stead, called on Parnell to make a sacrifice in return for the many sacrifices the Irish people had made for him. He asked no more than this: that he should efface himself for a brief period from public life.<sup>3</sup>

Mr. Parnell remained tranquil and unmoved in presence of the gathering storm. He seems to have thought that the Divorce Court proceedings had no concern for the public; it was a purely personal matter in no way affecting his public position. Mr. Davitt, before the case was tried, had asked him if the charges were true, and Mr. Parnell, while clearly resenting being questioned in the matter, assured him that all would be well.<sup>4</sup> The very day on which the decree of divorce was pronounced Parnell issued his usual summons to the Irish Party for the approaching session of Parliament. And he laid special stress upon the necessity for the attendance of every

<sup>1</sup> Morley, ii. 670.

<sup>2</sup> O'Brien's *Parnell*, ii. 246-7.

<sup>3</sup> *Annual Register*, p. 234.

<sup>4</sup> *Fall of Feudalism*, pp. 636-7.

man upon the opening day, "as it is unquestionable that the coming session will be one of combat from first to last, and that great issues depend upon its course."<sup>1</sup> The next day the *Freeman's Journal* had a paragraph, evidently inspired by Mr. Parnell, announcing that he had no intention of retiring from his position permanently or temporarily.<sup>2</sup> His resolution to hold on was no doubt strengthened by the loud professions of devotion uttered at the Leinster Hall meeting, and perhaps still more by the rancorous rhetoric of so many British Nonconformist orators, denouncing his conduct in unmeasured terms, and demanding his instant dismissal from public life. Nor had he any explanation to give or any apology to offer on the 25th of November, when the Irish Party with but one dissentient elected him as usual their sessional chairman.<sup>3</sup>

Meanwhile, however, Mr. Gladstone had taken decisive action. From the first his views were those of the *Daily Telegraph*—that Parnell should retire, at least for a time.<sup>4</sup> He recognized the difficulties of the Irish people, seeing that Parnell's services to Ireland were so great. And he saw that the Divorce Court revelations had shocked the moral sense of Great Britain, though he refused himself to speak on the moral question. He was a politician, and his duty was to watch and wait and note the trend of public opinion. Nor did he say a word publicly for days. But when from a hundred platforms and from many hundreds of pulpits Parnell had been attacked, when the Liberal Federation had declared against him and Liberal candidates refused to face the electors in co-operation with such a man, when every post brought letters of protest and denunciation, Gladstone could no longer hesitate.

Returning to London on the 24th of November, he saw Mr. Justin MacCarthy; Mr. Parnell had consulted him and even offered to resign his seat after the Phoenix Park murders; and Gladstone now expected some message from him, seeing that they were both working for Ireland, and in joint command of the Home Rule army. But Mr. MacCarthy knew nothing of

<sup>1</sup> Davitt, p. 638.

<sup>3</sup> T. D. Sullivan, p. 285.

<sup>2</sup> O'Brien, ii. 240.

<sup>4</sup> Morley, ii. 670.



Parnell's intentions. The following day the Irish Party were to elect their sessional chairman, and Mr. Gladstone asked Mr. MacCarthy to warn Mr. Parnell of his (Gladstone's) views, that is, "if he should not find that Mr. Parnell contemplated spontaneous action"; and further he asked Mr. MacCarthy as a last resort to inform the Irish Party. Mr. Gladstone also addressed a letter to Mr. Morley asking him to communicate with Parnell. But the latter could not be found. The fact was, he had already resolved on his course and deliberately kept away. At the last moment, just as the Irish Party meeting was about being held, Mr. MacCarthy saw him and gave him Gladstone's message. Parnell, however, declared he would not retire, and a few minutes later he was unanimously elected sessional chairman. With a negligence which, in the light of subsequent events, might almost be called a crime, Mr. MacCarthy had not told the party of his interview with Mr. Gladstone, and they elected Parnell ignorant of what had been taking place behind the scenes.

On his side, though he had made every effort, Mr. Morley had been unable to see Mr. Parnell; nor did he see him till the meeting of the Irish Party had taken place. He then read him Mr. Gladstone's letter. But he found him obdurate. He expected, he said, to be attacked by Gladstone, and he thought it right that Gladstone's letter should be published—"it would set him right with his party"; but for himself, having been already elected chairman by the Irish Party, he would not retire even for a single day. If he retired at all he would retire for good. Mr. Morley urged in the kindest and gentlest manner, and as a personal friend, that a different course was best; but Parnell was not to be moved. Then, and only then, when remonstrance and entreaty and argument and appeal were seen to be in vain, it was decided by Mr. Gladstone to publish his letter. Those who were prompted by faction rather than by patriotism, by personal attachment rather than by principle, described the letter as English dictation. The terms of the letter are the best contradiction to this absurd and mischievous accusation. There was nothing to wound Mr.

Parnell's feelings, nothing by way of command. It was only the sentinel's cry from the watch-tower that all was not well, the pilot's warning that the ship was being hurried on the rocks. The letter was never meant to be made public if only Mr. Parnell had had the good sense and the patriotism to take it in the friendly spirit in which it was written. It recorded Mr. Gladstone's conviction that "notwithstanding the splendid services rendered by Mr. Parnell to his country, his continuance at the present moment in the leadership would be productive of consequences disastrous in the highest degree to the cause of Ireland." It would render Mr. Gladstone's retention of the Liberal leadership, "based as it has been mainly upon the promotion of the Irish cause, almost a nullity."<sup>1</sup>

The publication of this letter on the evening of the 25th filled the Irish Party with dismay. Had the existence of such a letter been known in time it would certainly have affected their decision in reference to the election to the chair. It was now plain that Parnell's leadership would mean the breaking up of the Liberal Alliance, on which the hopes of Home Rule depended; it was equally plain that Parnell had known of Gladstone's wishes and had deliberately disregarded them; that, therefore, he would continue in the leadership as long as he could; and that in fighting the battle out, as he evidently intended, his election to the chair had greatly strengthened his position. The situation, however, must be faced. A mistake of the worst kind had been made. But if a man finds that he has taken the wrong road, it is only a fool who will refuse to turn back. In obedience, then, to a requisition signed by several of the party, Mr. Parnell summoned a meeting on the 29th. The meeting was held in the House of Commons, in Committee Room No. 15, and this room soon became the centre of attraction for the political world, the proceedings of Parliament then sitting being in comparison completely ignored. Differences of opinion at once manifested themselves. Some wanted Parnell to retire without delay; others advised him to stick to his guns and stand no dictation from an English

<sup>1</sup> Morley's *Gladstone*, ii. 670-81.



Party leader. Parnell himself sat silent and listened. Quick to see that a majority of the party were against him, he wanted time to influence public opinion outside, and adjourned the meeting to Monday the 1st of December.<sup>1</sup> In the interval Mr. Davitt published an *Appeal to the Irish Race* to repudiate a leader who had not the patriotism to efface himself for his country's good. Messrs. Dillon, O'Brien and T. P. O'Connor cabled from America that they could no longer support a leader bent on destroying every chance of Home Rule. Dr. Croke, Archbishop of Cashel, and Dr. Walsh, Archbishop of Dublin, who had vainly advised his retirement in private, now spoke out publicly. The former declared that if Parnell remained the elections would be lost, the Irish Party damaged, and the public conscience outraged. And Dr. Walsh declared that the party that retained him as a leader "could no longer count upon the support, the co-operation and the confidence of the Bishops of Ireland." These two distinguished prelates merely anticipated the pronouncement of the whole episcopacy which soon followed, and in which Parnell was denounced as one who had attained "a scandalous pre-eminence in guilt and shame."<sup>2</sup>

Any other man would have bent before the storm, but there was no limit to Parnell's selfishness and pride. As he could not rule he would ruin the Irish cause, and on the 29th of November the newspapers contained a manifesto from him "To the People of Ireland." Charging a majority of his party with having their integrity and independence sapped by Liberal wire-pullers, he felt constrained to appeal from them to the people. Then he proceeded to divulge the substance of the private interviews he had had with Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Morley in the previous year, with reference to the next Home Rule Bill. The Irish members, he said, were to be retained at Westminster, but reduced in number to 32; the British

<sup>1</sup> O'Brien's *Parnell*, ii. 256.

<sup>2</sup> *Annual Register*, p. 276; Stead's Article in *Review of Reviews*, December 1890; T. D. Sullivan's *Recollections*, pp. 298-9; copy of Bishops' Resolutions.

Parliament would make no serious effort to settle the Irish Land question, nor would the power to do so be given to the proposed Irish Parliament; the appointment of Irish judges would be reserved to the Imperial authority, and so also would the control of the Irish police, though the maintenance of the latter was to be from Irish funds. He told of Mr. Morley's despair of being able to do anything for the Plan of Campaign tenants. Finally, he told how Mr. Morley had suggested that Mr. Parnell himself should, in the next Home Rule Government, fill the office of Chief Secretary for Ireland, while one of the Irish National members should become one of the chief law officers of the Crown. Mr. Parnell was virtuously indignant at the iniquity of such a proposal, for his anxiety always had been to keep his party independent. "I do not believe," he said in conclusion, "that any action of the Irish people in supporting me will endanger the Home Rule cause, or postpone the establishment of an Irish Parliament; but even if the danger with which we are threatened by the Liberal Party of to-day were to be realized, I believe that the Irish people throughout the world would agree with me that postponement would be preferable to a compromise of our national rights by the acceptance of a measure which would not realize the aspirations of our race." Mr. Justin MacCarthy saw this manifesto on the night of the 28th, and implored Mr. Parnell not to publish it; but his remonstrances were unavailing, and on the following day it appeared. It was a discreditable document written by a desperate man; by a man whose heart had been hardened by long-continued sin.<sup>1</sup>

The attack on his Parliamentary colleagues came with specially bad grace from one who for years had notoriously neglected his Parliamentary duties; and the charge that their independence had been sapped was grossly unjust when applied to a party many of whom were poor, but not one of whom had accepted or solicited any Government office. Equally unjust and untrue were his accusations against Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Morley. Mr. Gladstone denied that he made the

<sup>1</sup> O'Brien's *Parnell*, ii. 258-66.



statements attributed to him, "or anything resembling them." What took place was a mere friendly interchange of views. "The conversation between us," he said, "was strictly confidential, and in my judgment, and, as I understood, in that of Mr. Parnell, to publish even a true account is to break the seal of confidence which alone renders political co-operation possible." Mr. Morley's denials were equally prompt and emphatic.<sup>1</sup> Nor was it forgotten that immediately after his interview with Mr. Gladstone in December 1889 Mr. Parnell had gone to Liverpool, where at a great public meeting he had lauded Mr. Gladstone to the skies. Calling him "our grand old leader," he bade his own countrymen rejoice, "for we are on the safe path for our legitimate freedom and our future prosperity."<sup>2</sup> If Gladstone was betraying Ireland this was not the language to use; and the man who did use it, and twelve months later denounced Gladstone whom he had praised, was not one to be trusted or believed.

These events rent the Irish Party in two. Against Mr. Parnell were arrayed its ablest men, those who had gone through the storm and stress of battle, and could point to important work done for Ireland. On the other hand, in the minority which clung to him, there was not a single man of first-class ability except Mr. John Redmond. Some were landlords who viewed with disfavour the recent rapid curtailment of landlord rights, and who in their hearts did not regret the break-up of a party which, when united, had been so powerful an instrument for reform. Others were Fenians imperfectly weaned from physical force weapons to constitutional action, and whose dominating idea was hatred of England. A good proportion were men of no political capacity, destitute alike of experience or foresight, men unable to distinguish between principles and catch-cries. Finally, a few of the more able, such as Mr. Redmond and Mr. Harrington, allowed their feelings to direct their course, and forgot their duty to Ireland in their personal attachment to Mr. Parnell. These would have eagerly welcomed his voluntary retirement.

<sup>1</sup> *Annual Register*, pp. 240-42.

<sup>2</sup> Morley, ii. 687 note.

Even the majority had no desire to humiliate him. Grateful for his past services, they wished to treat him tenderly; jealous of his fame, they endeavoured to save him from himself. They appealed to him for the sake of Ireland; for the sake of the evicted tenants who would be left without homes and without hope. If only he would retire for six months they would leave the chair vacant for his return; and meantime he could leave the management of the party to a committee, every member of which could be appointed by himself. It was all in vain. Nothing could move him; nothing could serve to neutralize the effect of that fatal witchery which had darkened his intellect and completely dominated his will.<sup>1</sup>

In the long debates in Committee Room No. 15, the speaking on both sides was often of a high order. Mr. Parnell was in the chair, but he made little pretence of being impartial. He regarded the fight as a matter of life and death, and during these days showed infinite dexterity and resource. In oratory and debating power he was no match for such brilliant men as Mr. Sexton and Mr. Healy. But in using his position in the chair to help his friends, in discovering expedients for prolonging the debates and delaying a final decision, he often defeated their best efforts. From his own conduct, which was the cause of all the trouble that had arisen, he cleverly diverted attention to the conduct of the Liberal leaders, to the inconsistencies of members of the Irish Party, to the character of the next Home Rule Bill. He taunted his opponents with having first elected him and then turned on him at the bidding of an English statesman. He charged Mr. Healy with ingratitude, seeing that it was he himself who had first discovered Mr. Healy's genius and given him the opportunity of advancing in the world. He expressed his readiness to retire if only adequate assurances regarding the next Home Rule Bill could be got from the Liberal leaders. He professed entire disinterestedness, maintaining that his responsibility was to the Irish people, and his anxiety only about Ireland. At last, after days of wearisome and exhausting delay, when every expedient had been tried by

<sup>1</sup> Davitt's *Fall of Feudalism*, p. 643.



Mr. Parnell, and when he stubbornly refused to take a vote, the majority of the party left Room No. 15. Retiring to an adjoining room, they elected Mr. MacCarthy sessional chairman, giving him a committee of the chief members as an Advisory Council. They were in all 45; counting the American delegates they were 50; the remainder, over 30 in number, clung to Mr. Parnell. He maintained that he was still chairman, not having been formally deposed; and he flung at his opponents the epithet of Seceders.<sup>1</sup>

The battle was then transferred to Ireland, where an opportunity had just arisen for testing the strength of the opposing hosts. Before the split a vacancy had occurred in the representation of North Kilkenny, and with Mr. Parnell's approval, the candidate selected was Sir John Pope Hennessy, a distinguished Corkman who had filled the position of Governor of the Mauritius and also of Hong Kong. As a Catholic he refused to follow Parnell after his condemnation by the Bishops, though he was still willing to stand as the Anti-Parnellite candidate. Mr. Parnell, who had declared that he would hunt the Seceders from public life, put up as his candidate Mr. Vincent Scully, a popular Tipperary landlord, and on the 10th of December arrived in Dublin to support his nominee. He had little doubt that he would be victorious, and undoubtedly the forces on his side were formidable. The *Freeman's Journal* threw its enormous influence into the scale in his favour, and day after day bitterly and unscrupulously attacked his opponents. Its evening and weekly editions, circulating in every town and village in the land, were on the same side. *United Ireland*, established by Nationalist funds, Mr. Parnell also captured. Accompanied by a boisterous mob he broke into the offices, crowbar in hand, nor was any attempt made to stop him by the police. All Dublin was with him. Mr. Healy and Mr. Sexton, on landing at Kingstown from England, were watched and in imminent danger, and as they walked the streets of Dublin they carried their lives in their hands. The National

<sup>1</sup> The "Parnell Split," from the *Times*, 1891; *The Story of Room Fifteen*, by Donal Sullivan, M.P.

League, controlled by the Parnellite Mr. Harrington, was also obedient to the duly-elected chairman of the Irish Party. And when Mr. Parnell addressed a meeting at the Rotunda, his reception by an enormous crowd was a scene of wild enthusiasm. He told his immense audience that what Dublin said to-day, Ireland would say to-morrow; and as he passed southward to Cork, on his way to Kilkenny, he was met at every wayside station by cheering crowds.<sup>1</sup> His main reliance was on the Fenians. They had little love for him while he was chief of a great constitutional party, for he had won over many from their ranks to constitutional ways. But when he was bent on substituting division for unity, and so discrediting all Parliamentary effort, they flocked to him and fought his battles. And in Kilkenny and elsewhere they organized his meetings and intimidated his opponents. The soldiers of Napoleon, when entering on a new campaign, laughed at the idea of defeat, and at Kilkenny an equal confidence was shown by the supporters of Mr. Parnell. The editor of the *Freeman's Journal* boasted to an Anti-Parnellite that they had the Chief, the funds, the press, "and we will knock hell out of you."<sup>2</sup>

The Chief was indeed worth much. His activity and vigour were astonishing. He passed from one end of the constituency to the other like a whirlwind, smiting his opponents as he passed. He attacked Pope Hennessy; he called Healy a scoundrel and a traitor, Davitt a jackdaw, Dillon a peacock, and others the scum of creation.<sup>3</sup> The *Freeman's Journal* reported all his speeches fully, and supported him by every lying tale which it could invent. *United Ireland*, under its Parnellite management, published a cartoon of Davitt receiving a bag of gold from perfidious Albion, while Erin, stricken with grief, shaded her eyes rather than look on at this deed of shame. The landlords and agents everywhere gave their good wishes to Parnell, and on the same side were the bailiffs and grabbers; the policeman who was wont freely to

<sup>1</sup> O'Brien, ii. 290-8; *Annual Register*, p. 276.

<sup>2</sup> Healy, *Why Ireland is not Free*, p. 33.

<sup>3</sup> Healy, p. 34.



use his baton ; the publican who wanted more elections and more faction fights so that his whisky and porter would be the more liberally consumed ; and the public sinner who had perhaps felt the chastising hand of the Church and wished to be revenged upon the priest. On the other hand, Davitt and Healy fought well, and with the intimate knowledge they possessed they were able to expose the false statements of their opponents. The priests called on the people to forsake an impenitent adulterer, and to vindicate the good name of Ireland, and rescue their country from one who was bent on hurrying it to destruction. And a little paper, *The Insuppressible*, published at the *Nation* office, combated the best efforts of the *Freeman* and *United Ireland*. When the poll was declared, 2527 had voted for Hennessy, and only 1367 for his opponent.<sup>1</sup> Nor did the Parnellite candidate at Sligo in April fare much better, though the majority in this second contest was not so sweeping<sup>2</sup> as at Kilkenny.

After the events of Committee Room No. 15, Mr. Healy had at no time any faith in negotiating with Mr. Parnell. He believed the best course was to fight him. If it did not bring him to reason, at least resolute opposition and continued defeat would thin the ranks of his adherents. Mr. Dillon and Mr. O'Brien did not take this view. They were specially responsible for the Plan of Campaign tenants, and knew that disunion would mean these tenants' ruin ; and for this reason among others Mr. O'Brien started for Europe in December, hoping by a personal interview with Mr. Parnell to effect a settlement. As there was a warrant out for his arrest, he could not touch British territory. He therefore went to France, and at Boulogne had several interviews with Mr. Parnell. Mr. O'Brien is of a sanguine temperament, and at that time must have had a large amount of faith in his own capacity if he thought he could change Parnell. His proposals were indeed strange. The Irish Bishops were to retract their condemnation of Parnell, Mr. Gladstone to withdraw his letter to Morley, Mr.

<sup>1</sup> O'Brien's *Parnell*, ii. 299-309 ; Healy, p. 34.

<sup>2</sup> *Annual Register*, p. 240.

MacCarthy to retire from the chair and be succeeded by Mr. Dillon, and Mr. Parnell to remain President of the National League. Mr. Parnell was an eminently practical man, and knew well that these proposals were impracticable. He was, however, though unwilling to yield to Mr. Dillon, quite willing to retire from the chair in favour of Mr. O'Brien. But in this case Mr. O'Brien must get satisfactory assurances on the Irish question from Mr. Gladstone ; the decision as to the assurances being satisfactory to remain with Mr. O'Brien and Mr. Parnell himself. In January Mr. Dillon came from America to aid his friend, Mr. O'Brien, and ultimately he was selected as Mr. Parnell's successor. But the latter was dissatisfied with the assurances got from the Liberal leaders by Mr. MacCarthy and Mr. Sexton,<sup>1</sup> and, after dragging along for more than six weeks, the Boulogne negotiations ended in failure. Messrs. Dillon and O'Brien then returned to Ireland to serve their six months' imprisonment in Galway Jail.

In entering prison both gentlemen wrote public letters. Mr. O'Brien stated that a satisfactory settlement had been shipwrecked by a mere contest about words and phrases. But he did not say who was to blame, nor on which side his sympathies lay in the struggle between Parnell and his opponents. Mr. Dillon was equally vague. He spoke, however, with great severity of the vindictive and brutal manner in which Mr. Parnell had been assailed, presumably by Mr. Healy. And he recorded his conviction that a satisfactory arrangement could have been arrived at had not powerful influences on both sides intervened. Both gentlemen were clearly anxious for peace, and had laboured to bring it about. But the fact was that they were overmatched by Mr. Parnell. His biographer records how he regarded Mr. O'Brien's going to Hawarden and negotiating with Mr. Gladstone as a grim joke.

<sup>1</sup> *Annual Register*, p. 238. Mr. Gladstone promised to have the Land question settled by the Imperial Parliament simultaneously with the passing of a Home Rule Bill or within a limited period, or failing this, to give the Irish Parliament power to settle it ; the police were to come under control of the Irish authority within five years.



Nor is there any reason to doubt that his object was to spread confusion among his opponents ; to have Messrs. Dillon and O'Brien quarrel with Mr. Healy, and perhaps quarrel with one another ; and in addition to have the Anti-Parnellites quarrel with the English Liberals.<sup>1</sup>

While election contests were being fought in Ireland and peace negotiations were in progress at Boulogne, Parliament was sitting. The Unionist promises at the General Election of 1886 that their alternative to Home Rule would be justice to Ireland and equal laws with those of Great Britain, had hitherto taken the shape of Coercion, and of some vague but unfulfilled promises of reform in the Queen's Speeches. But the collapse of the *Times*' forgeries and the loss of so many by-elections warned them not to rely entirely on Coercion ; and in the winter session of 1890 measures were taken to cope with the recent failure of the potato crop ; money was voted for the building of Irish railways ; and an Irish Land Purchase Bill and a Congested Districts Bill were introduced. Both these latter measures passed in the session of 1891. Under the Land Purchase Act a sum of £30,000,000 was voted to enable the tenants to buy their holdings, the money to be repaid—principal and interest—by annual instalments extending over a period of forty-nine years. To provide against any possible repudiations on the part of the tenants there was a Guarantee Fund, made up of moneys voted from the General Taxation Fund for local purposes. The Bill was objected to by the Liberals because these local grants were hypothecated without the consent of any of the local authorities. And the Liberals recalled with damaging effect the Unionist attack on Land Purchase in 1886. Nevertheless the Bill passed rapidly through all its stages, and without serious amendment either in Lords or Commons.<sup>2</sup> Under the second Act a Congested Districts Board was set up, not under the control of Dublin Castle, and yet nominated rather than elected. Provided with an annual

<sup>1</sup> O'Brien's *Parnell*, ii. 311-27 ; Healy, pp. 33-42 ; *Annual Register*, pp. 25-28, 237-8.

<sup>2</sup> *Annual Register*, 1890, pp. 254-5 ; 1891, pp. 105-9, 143-4.

income, it was to deal with the congested districts in the West, to improve the breed of live-stock, to teach the peasants better methods of tillage, to improve their dwellings, to help them to drain and fence, to give a helping hand to struggling local industries, to acquire untenanted land to which the poorer tenants might be migrated, and thus would congestion be relieved. In spite of the fact that the members of the Board were unpaid and had but a limited income, valuable work has been done. For this three members of the Board<sup>1</sup> deserve special thanks. Sir Horace Plunkett was an expert on economic questions, and, though a landlord, had popular sympathies. Dr. O'Donnell, the Bishop of Raphoe, had the deep love for the people that always characterized his ancestors, the ancient chiefs of Tyrconnell, and to high intellectual culture united a thoroughly practical mind. No one knew better than Father Denis O'Hara, P.P., the conditions of the poor in the congested districts of Mayo. Gifted with abilities of the highest order, genial, unassuming, gentle and kind, his zeal for the people had no taint of selfishness or vanity. He knew exactly what they wanted and how their condition might best be improved, and he spared neither time nor labour on their behalf. In character and intellect there is no higher type of Irish priest, and if the Congested Districts Board became popular, it was chiefly because it had among its members two such men as Father O'Hara and Dr. O'Donnell.

In Parliament Mr. Parnell supported the measures of the Government. On the Land Purchase Bill he voted against the Liberals,<sup>2</sup> and on more than one occasion crossed swords with the Liberal leaders and with the Anti-Parnellites, especially with Mr. Healy.<sup>3</sup> But his chief anxiety was about Irish public opinion, and week after week he crossed over from England to hold Sunday meetings in Ireland. His speeches at these meetings were always in the same strain. The Liberals he

<sup>1</sup> The members were appointed by the Liberal Government, for the Act did not come into operation till the Tories were turned out at the General Election of 1892.

<sup>2</sup> *Annual Register*, 1890.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 1891, p. 107.



called wolves, and Gladstone he called a "grand old spider." He heaped abuse on the Anti-Parnellite members, whom he described as sold to an English party and betraying Ireland in Parliament. He taunted the Bishops with holding back till Gladstone had spoken, and with following the lead of the Non-conformists. He appealed to the Fenians everywhere, and at every meeting he was supported by their cheers and by their sticks. Strong in the possession of the only National organization, he was provided with agents in every village and town. Backed strongly by the *Freeman's Journal* and *United Ireland*, he had means of influencing public opinion which his opponents did not possess. Yet as time passed he was distinctly losing ground. The defeat at Kilkenny was a bad beginning and greatly depressed the spirits of his supporters, who were still further disheartened by the loss of Sligo. The reckless charges against the Liberals and Anti-Parnellites were contradicted by obvious facts; and the insulting epithets flung at the great name of Gladstone were in every way unworthy of Parnell, and disgusted his best friends.<sup>1</sup> As for the charges against the Bishops, the delay was at the worst prompted only by tenderness for Parnell and out of gratitude for his past services. Dr. Walsh, Archbishop of Dublin, had been solemnly assured by Mr. Davitt that Parnell was innocent, and had been given this assurance on the authority of Parnell himself. When it appeared that the Archbishop had been deceived, because Davitt, his informant, had been deceived, it was no easy matter to get the Bishops together. Three of them were in Rome and had to be communicated with; even those at home lived far apart, and some far from Dublin; and it is certain that had they come together at once and condemned Parnell, they would have been attacked as eager for his destruction, because they were jealous of his power.<sup>2</sup>

As to the National League, its power rapidly diminished, especially after March 1891, when a great National Convention was held in Dublin, and the National Federation, with the hearty good wishes of bishops and priests, was formed.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> O'Brien's *Parnell*, ii. 335-6.

<sup>2</sup> *Annual Register*, p. 242.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 239.

Nor did the *Freeman's Journal* continue Parnellite. A new Nationalist organ, *The National Press*, was founded by public subscription, and so vigorously assailed the *Freeman* that diminished circulation was the result. Mr. Parnell married Mrs. O'Shea in June, and this was given by the chief shareholders in the *Freeman* as the cause of its change of front. But whatever truth there may have been in this, it is certain that Mr. Parnell's marriage lost him the support of tens of thousands of the farmers. Until then they obstinately refused to believe him guilty; but for a Catholic who believes in the indissolubility of Christian marriage, the union of Parnell with the wife of a living man was certain proof of his guilt. As to the Fenians, they were and remained his enthusiastic supporters. But most of them were young and had no votes, and no amount of cheering and violence unaccompanied by voting power will carry contested elections. And now other events besides these enumerated served to dishearten Parnell. His candidate for the vacant seat at Carlow was disastrously beaten, and more than this, Messrs. Dillon and O'Brien, on their release from prison, declared definitely and emphatically against him. Mr. O'Brien went so far as to excuse the violence with which Parnell had hitherto been fought, by declaring that it was impossible to fight him with sugar-sticks.

In spite of all these things Parnell refused to yield. In place of the *Freeman's Journal*, which had deserted him, he established the *Irish Daily Independent*. He strove to give courage and confidence to his friends by holding a National League Convention,<sup>1</sup> and he still professed to be confident of final victory. But this confidence he probably did not feel. The weekly meetings were continued, but they were followed only by lessened enthusiasm and continued defeats. At last, under the strain of disappointment and excitement, and travelling in all sorts of weather, his health began to fail. It had not been good for some years before this date. In 1891 it got worse. In the end of September, cold and exposure brought on an attack of rheumatism, and on the 7th of October his

<sup>1</sup> *Annual Register*, p. 244.



stormy career was closed. He died at Brighton, and on the following Sunday, the 11th of October, his remains arrived in Ireland and were borne through the streets of Dublin to their last resting-place in Glasnevin. Rarely has such a numerous-attended funeral been seen. Crowds came from all parts of the country by special trains, the calculations being that fully 200,000 persons either followed the hearse or were spectators along the route.<sup>1</sup> Yet it was not a national funeral, and in spite of the enormous crowds and the genuine sorrow, the end of Parnell was a tragedy, with scarce a parallel in Irish history, so many of the pages of which are blotted by tears. Dying one year earlier, the whole Irish race would have wept at his open grave. But the events of the last year had alienated from him the affections of millions, for it was realized that if, like Moses, he had led his people in sight of the promised land, unlike Moses, he had endeavoured to lead them back again into the desert. With his own hands he had deliberately pulled down the pillars of the temple he had reared. Yet with all his faults he looms large among the greatest of Ireland's sons. It would be as vain to deny him greatness as it would to belittle the Amazon or the Mississippi, or to deny that Mont Blanc towers high among its fellows. In patience and foresight, in tenacity of purpose and strength of will, we must, to find his equal, go back to Hugh O'Neill or Brian Boru. If we are estimating the qualities which go to make a great constitutional leader, a great orator and debater, who could move millions of men and with equal readiness rouse or calm their passions, we must declare Parnell immeasurably inferior to O'Connell. But in appreciation of facts, in adjusting means to the desired end, in choosing the best time and place to attack his enemies, and in selecting suitable instruments for the work he had to do, even O'Connell must yield him the premier place. Not yet, less than a quarter of a century after his death, can full justice be done to him; for the faults of his later years, and the national evils which they caused, are vividly and bitterly remembered still. But when the last Irish landlord

<sup>1</sup> *Annual Register.*

has disappeared, and with him the multiplied evils of Irish landlordism; when brighter and better days have come for an afflicted land that has long sat within the shadows, Irishmen will then think of the man who struck such vigorous blows on their behalf; and while a grateful and generous nation will remember the services of Parnell, his faults and his failings will be forgotten.



## CHAPTER XVII

### *Parnellites and Anti-Parnellites*

SELDOM has dissension wrought such havoc in Ireland as in the year preceding the death of Parnell. Within that period the Irish Party was broken up; the great organization of the National League fell into ruin; the Irish abroad, who had subscribed so generously to the National cause, ceased to subscribe further, disgusted with the Irish at home. Every city and town and village was torn by discord; even families ranged themselves on opposite sides—brother fighting against brother, father against son. Local leaders, long tried by sacrifice and long trusted, fell into disfavour, and instead of being cheered were hooted and groaned. Priests who had stood by the people in dark days were attacked and sometimes stoned; their words unheeded when spoken from the pulpit or from the platform; their churches made scenes of disorder by men who turned their backs on the sacrifice of the mass, cheering excitedly for Parnell. Such was the sense of impotence among those but lately full of hope and courage, that the Campaign tenants of Smith Barry hastened to make terms with their landlords, and leaving the mushroom town in which they dwelt, they returned to the houses in Tipperary which they had so recklessly abandoned.<sup>1</sup> Grieved at the dreary outlook, growing every day still more drear, Dr. Walsh, the Archbishop of Dublin, appealed to the people in a public letter to close up their ranks. "I am deeply convinced," he said, "that the continuance of this ruinous conflict, even for a little longer, must be absolutely detrimental to every hope of the establishment of Home Rule for Ireland,

<sup>1</sup> *Annual Register*, p. 243.

at all events within the present century. To me it is one of the most obvious truths of the present deplorable situation that the fitness of our people for Home Rule, and indeed for constitutional government of any kind, is on its trial, and that so far the evidence of that fitness is somewhat less clear than it ought to be." These weighty words were disregarded by those who ought to have paused and listened. Nor had Parnell any more suitable reply than to describe the Archbishop's appeal as child's talk, and the greatest nonsense.<sup>1</sup>

With the death of the unfortunate leader it was hoped that wiser counsels would prevail among his followers. Hitherto the conduct of the Parnellite members of Parliament had been open to the severest censure. They had joined with Mr. Parnell in calumniating every one who presumed to differ from them; they had assailed the clergy with virulence and without restraint; they had repeated Mr. Parnell's charges—false as they knew them to be—against their late colleagues in Parliament; they had agreed with him in calling the Liberals wolves and Mr. Gladstone "a grand old spider"; and they had encouraged Mr. Parnell to persevere in his reckless course, which ended for him so disastrously. Had they tried to hold him back; had they advised and remonstrated, and when advice and remonstrance were found useless, had they sternly told him, as Mr. Sexton did, that even *his* services to Ireland did not entitle him to effect Ireland's ruin; had they, when all else failed, refused to follow him, they would probably have saved him from himself. He was reckless; but, reckless as he was, he could have made no fight if deserted by all his Parliamentary colleagues, and must have yielded to necessity, no matter how reluctant he was to yield to reason. A little foresight, a little courage, some consideration for poor Ireland and her cause were all that were required, and the fame and even life of a great leader would have been saved as he rushed recklessly down the abyss. One of the ablest of the Parnellites, and one of

<sup>1</sup> *Annual Register*, pp. 243-4.



the most respected, declared he could not desert Parnell because to do so would be to submit to English dictation ; it would be to destroy the unity of the Irish Party and the Irish race ; it would be an act of national dishonour. Lastly, he believed Parnell would win.<sup>1</sup> It is hard to believe that the parrot cry of English dictation, though it might have deceived men of shallow understanding, could have seriously influenced a man of Mr. Clancy's ability. Nor could it be an act of national dishonour for a religious and moral race to have deserted a man who had grievously and shamelessly sinned, and yet who refused to admit that he had sinned at all, and who scoffed at the notion of making any atonement for what he had done.

It was perhaps the last of Mr. Clancy's reasons, the belief, namely, that Parnell would win, which must have influenced most of the Parnellites. Fascinated by his extraordinary qualities, they thought him invincible, and were satisfied that his triumph over all his opponents would be but a matter of time. But when the grave was opened to receive him the time had surely come to pause. In three separate contested elections the Parnellites had already been beaten, and this under the leadership, active and brilliant, of Parnell himself. When Parnell was gone, what chance was there that the fortunes of the party might be retrieved ? Men of ability there were among his colleagues, but not one with the prestige of his services, none with his capacity to conduct a campaign, none with his grim tenacity and iron will. And yet with a reckless and criminal folly not often equalled they rejected all offers of reconciliation with their late colleagues. The vast majority of the Anti-Parnellites would have given them as genuine a welcome back as the father in the Gospel gave to his prodigal son. The bitter things said would have been soon forgotten, the evil passions roused would have subsided ; the nation would have generously forgiven in the joy of once more seeing unity in the national ranks. But the Parnellites had not the humility to acknowledge any

<sup>1</sup> Mr. J. J. Clancy, M.P., in *Contemporary Review*, March 1891.

error, nor the public spirit to retrace their steps, nor the generosity to shake hands with old colleagues over a great man's open grave. Bitterness in their hearts and blasphemies on their lips, they declared that Parnell had been done to death by Irishmen who had deserted him, and that they would not consort with murderers. Feeling ran so high that the Anti-Parnellite members of Parliament dared not attend the dead leader's funeral. Mr. Dillon was attacked in the streets of Dublin by men who shouted, "Down with Dillon the murderer."<sup>1</sup> Other prominent men were treated with similar brutality. Nor did the Parnellite members of Parliament delay in issuing a collective manifesto repudiating and denouncing the men "who, in obedience to foreign dictation, have loaded with calumny and hounded to death the foremost man of the Irish race."<sup>2</sup> With such men, of course, they could not coalesce, and resolving to continue the fight, they elected Mr. John Redmond their leader. He began badly, however, for having resigned his seat in Wexford to contest Parnell's seat in Cork, he was defeated. A few weeks later he was consoled. Mr. Power, M.P. for the City of Waterford, died, and Mr. Redmond, who was opposed by Mr. Davitt as Anti-Parnellite candidate, was returned by a substantial majority.<sup>3</sup> At the close of the year, therefore, as at the beginning, discord ruled in Ireland, and the outlook did not brighten with the dawn of the new year.

The fact was that there was serious dissension among the Anti-Parnellites, and that party, instead of attracting the Parnellites, threatened to split in two. The trouble was caused by the conflicting views of Mr. Healy and Mr. Dillon.

<sup>1</sup> T. D. Sullivan, pp. 314-17.

<sup>2</sup> *Annual Register*, p. 246; T. D. Sullivan's *Recollections*, pp. 318-19. *United Ireland* wrote: "Shake hands over his grave. Nay, poor fools; poor, wretched, creeping, wriggling reptiles; rather than do this thing we should prefer to give Ireland to the Saxon, once and for all, unreservedly, unblushingly, in the light of day; we should prefer to sell her to the Saxon like honest brokers, strike our bargain in the market-place, and leave it to other men and other times to vindicate our country."

<sup>3</sup> *Annual Register*, p. 247.



Both were able and determined and not easily restrained ; and Mr. MacCarthy, unlike Mr. Parnell, was quite unable to keep them in check. Had Mr. Sexton been appointed chairman instead of Mr. MacCarthy it might have been better. Even the ablest among the Anti-Parnellites could not have denied his fitness for the position, looking to Parliamentary experience and ability. As an orator and debater he was second only to Mr. Gladstone ; nor was he ever found unequal to the occasion when suddenly called upon to address the House of Commons. A further recommendation in his favour was that he had not abused Mr. Parnell. He had patiently and with dignity borne with the abuse heaped upon him by the fallen leader, but he had been unwilling to strike back ; and in the campaign in Ireland he had taken no part. He had, in fact, effaced himself, and while the country stood badly in need of his leadership, he would not lead. The result was that the hardest fighting had to be done by Mr. Healy ; and while Dillon and O'Brien were in prison, it was Healy who led the Anti-Parnellite forces. He led them with conspicuous ability, for his fighting qualities were not inferior to those of Parnell, and Healy had the advantage of being in the right, while Parnell was just as clearly in the wrong. It is highly probable that the Parnellites would have won at Kilkenny and Sligo and Carlow had they not had to encounter Mr. Healy. He took a leading part in the founding of the *National Press* and of the National Federation ; and in the trying months after the split, Mr. Healy, without a thought of himself or of his interests, met every opponent and faced every danger. Fascinated by his splendid abilities, the younger clergy were all on his side, as were the ablest men in the Parliamentary party ; the Catholic Bishops were grateful for the way in which he had championed their teaching ; and the local leaders, despairing of converting the Parnellites, were delighted with a leader who could fight so well. Not a few thought then and subsequently that he would have been the best selection for the leadership. Parnell, who had no love for him, declared that he had "the best political head" of all

the Irish Parliamentarians.<sup>1</sup> No lawyer since O'Connell was readier-witted in the Law Courts, no man in the House of Commons was listened to with greater interest; for he was always master of his subject, and had always something fresh to say. He could obstruct as skilfully as Parnell, while his capacity for the practical work of legislation was far beyond that of Parnell. To draft a Bill or a clause he had no equal in his own party, and in the years he was in Parliament there was no measure dealing with Ireland which he did not amend and improve. Like Parnell he could be silent when silence was better than speech; he was patient and tenacious, and always looked for practical results. These great qualities were marred by serious defects. His temper was hot, his tongue was bitter, his sarcasm scathing, he said things which rankled and were not forgotten; nor was there any of their opponents with whom the Parnellites were so enraged. If, therefore, some thought Mr. Healy the most capable man to lead, many others convinced themselves that under his leadership unity and peace would be impossible.

Mr. Dillon was among the latter class. The relations between the two men had not been cordial, and each did the other injustice. Mr. Healy greatly underrated Dillon's abilities, which are very far above the ordinary; while Mr. Dillon dwelt too much on Healy's selfishness and ambition. The fact was that Mr. Healy seems to have never had any desire to be Irish leader. Mr. Dillon, however, thought he had, and whether he had or not, he thought that too much power was in his hands. He considered Mr. Healy's policy of combat to be exasperating to the Parnellites and fatal to all hope of unity; and he considered that his continued reliance on the clergy would arouse the slumbering bigotry of British Nonconformity, and thus gravely injure the cause of Home Rule. As an alternative Mr. Dillon's own programme was to win over the Parnellites by kindness and conciliation, to end the ruinous newspaper war between the *Freeman's Journal* and the *National Press*, and to substitute some strong man, perhaps himself, for Mr.

<sup>1</sup> O'Brien's *Parnell*, ii. 334.



MacCarthy as chairman of the Irish Party. Though by no means anti-clerical, Mr. Dillon had at no time hesitated to criticize the Catholic clergy if he thought their action open to criticism; he had openly assailed the Bishop of Limerick; and a party under his lead, and which included Parnellites as well as Anti-Parnellites, would certainly not be open to the accusation of being a clerical party. With the newspapers Mr. Dillon's difficulties were not great. Mr. Gray, the leading *Freeman* shareholder, was quite willing to abjure Parnellism and join with the *National Press*, if only under the new arrangement the Parnellites were not to be marked out for destruction, if Mr. Healy's policy of the "tomahawk and the sweeping brush" were to be abandoned. But the *National Press* shareholders, whether Mr. Healy liked it or not, insisted that on the new Board of Directors they should be adequately represented. On this question much was said and written. Messrs. Healy, Murphy and Dickson had been Directors of the *National Press*, and under the new arrangement became Directors of the *Freeman* and *National Press*. They offered a seat on the Board to Mr. Dillon, making him also chairman, but he declined unless seats were also given to Messrs. Sexton and O'Brien, on the grounds that otherwise his views would not be represented sufficiently in the columns of the *Freeman* and *National Press*, and that Mr. Healy would be the dictator of its language and its policy.<sup>1</sup> Ultimately it was agreed that when the legal difficulties regarding the amalgamation of the newspapers had been finally got over—and this took some time—Mr. Dillon and Mr. Sexton and another nominated by Mr. MacCarthy were to be appointed Directors, so that in this matter Mr. Dillon had his way.<sup>2</sup> His friends insisted on nominating him for the Chair against Mr. MacCarthy, though he was not successful.<sup>3</sup> But he was able to have the Committee of the party appoint himself, Mr. Sexton and Mr. MacCarthy Treasurers and Trustees of the party funds, and in this way Mr. Healy was left out in the cold. Nor did Mr. Dillon succeed in winning over the Parnellites. On his release from prison (July 1891), their

<sup>1</sup> Healy, pp. 60-64.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 67-71.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 55.

language was so violent that he declared against ever opening negotiations with them ; and their language was still more violent at the death of Parnell. Later on Mr. Dillon again became hopeful, and in February 1892 he opened up negotiations with the Parnellites only to be again repulsed ; and he was equally unsuccessful in the following June. On this latter occasion difficulties came from his own side ; for Mr. Dillon was willing to hand over a large number of seats to the Parnellites, but the Anti-Parnellites as a whole refused to support him in this.<sup>1</sup> And yet it is impossible to withhold sympathy for Mr. Dillon, for unity would have been cheaply purchased at the sacrifice of a few seats to the Parnellites.

While these disputes went on between rival newspapers and rival politicians, Parliament sat, and an Irish Local Government Bill was introduced by Mr. Balfour in the session of 1892. Meagre, halting and stingy, the measure was altogether different from the Acts recently passed for England and Scotland. The County and Barony Councils to be set up would be partly elective and partly nominated, and seriously hampered in the exercise of their powers. Evidently assuming that they would be corrupt bodies, Mr. Balfour, to check their prospective extravagance, inserted a clause giving power to any twenty cess-payers to arraign the Council before two Judges. In case of guilt being established to the satisfaction of these Judges, the Council could be dissolved and be replaced by one constituted by the Lord-Lieutenant. Alone among prominent public men, Mr. Chamberlain praised this pitiful Bill ; even Mr. Balfour himself felt no enthusiasm for it. By the Irish Party and the Liberal leaders it was fiercely assailed. Mr. Sexton attacked it as an insult to the Irish people, an affront both to Parliament and to the nation ; Mr. Gladstone called it a miserable Bill ; and Mr. Healy described the provision for enabling a body of cess-payers to arraign and even dissolve the Council as the "put 'em in the dock clause."<sup>2</sup> In spite of all this adverse criticism the Bill passed its second reading by a substantial majority. It was, however, abandoned by the Government in June ; and

<sup>1</sup> T. D. Sullivan, p. 323.

<sup>2</sup> Davitt's *Fall of Feodalism*, p. 664.



the Unionists, after six years of office, had to confess that they had done nothing to redeem their pledges of 1886.<sup>1</sup>

Then in July came the General Election. The ability and influence of Mr. Gladstone had kept Home Rule to the front, and it was on that question that the issue would be decided. Two years before there was no doubt as to the direction in which the tide was flowing. The fall of Parnell and the unhappy events which followed were for a time a formidable obstacle ; but in 1892 the obstacle had ceased to be effective, and there was no doubt that with Gladstone was the flowing tide. And this was the case in spite of the determined efforts of Unionist writers and orators. Professor Dicey was eloquent in defence of the Union and in giving expression to the protest of Ulster. He doubted if Gladstone would have such a majority as would carry a Home Rule Bill in the House of Commons, but if he should, the Unionists as a last resort should fall back on the House of Lords. For he thought it intolerable that the loyal Protestants of Ulster should be placed under the rule of men found guilty of intimidation, conspiracy and crime ; and playing the rôle of prophet of evil, he declared that Home Rule in Ireland would mean civil war in Ulster.<sup>2</sup> Lord Salisbury not only predicted that civil war would come, but plainly intimated that it ought to come, and would be amply justified. He did not believe in the unrestricted power of the British Parliament ; and if it insisted on setting up an Irish Parliament, he was confident that the Ulstermen had not lost "their sturdy love of freedom or their detestation of arbitrary power."<sup>3</sup> Mr. Chamberlain was equally solicitous about the maintenance of Ulster Protestant ascendancy, and equally clear as to the right of Ulster to rebel.<sup>4</sup> And the Ulster Unionists held a great Convention at Belfast in June, in which strong language was used and strong resolutions passed. "We record," they said, "our determination to have nothing to do with a Parliament certain to be controlled by

<sup>1</sup> *Annual Register*, pp. 21-26, 85-91, 105.

<sup>2</sup> Articles in *Contemporary Review*, April and July 1892.

<sup>3</sup> *Annual Register*, p. 70.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* 53, 93.

men responsible for the crime and outrage of the Land League, the dishonesty of the Plan of Campaign, and the cruelties of boycotting, many of whom have shown themselves the ready instruments of clerical domination; and we declare to the people of Great Britain our conviction that the attempt to set up such a Parliament in Ireland will inevitably result in disorder, violence and bloodshed such as has not been experienced in this century, and announce our resolve to take no part in the election or proceedings of such a Parliament, the authority of which, should it ever be constituted, we shall be forced to repudiate."<sup>1</sup> All this, however, did not produce the desired effect on public opinion. The prophecies of Lord Salisbury and Mr. Chamberlain were discounted by the arguments of the Liberal leaders; and every one knew that the threats of Ulster were nothing but sound and fury.

The quarrels among the Irish Nationalists were more disheartening to the Irish at home and abroad, and certainly discouraged the friends of Ireland in Great Britain. Why the minority could not agree with the majority nobody not blinded by faction could understand. Parnellites and Anti-Parnellites were equally in favour of Home Rule, and should have been equally ready to strengthen Mr. Gladstone's hands. Instead of this the Parnellites uttered nothing but threats against their late colleagues, and had nothing but insults for Mr. Gladstone. They maintained that Irish National opinion was all on their side, and so confident were they that they contested almost every Nationalist seat. The more reckless of them boasted that they would win 50 seats, which would mean the annihilation of their opponents; the more cautious of them counted on a gain of 20 seats. In either case they would have a majority over the Anti-Parnellites, and to bring about this result they spared no form of intimidation and violence. But it was disaster rather than victory that attended their efforts, and when the elections were over 72 Anti-Parnellites and but 9 Parnellites had been returned. Five Nationalist seats had

<sup>1</sup> Note to Professor Dicey's article of July 1892.



been lost to the Unionists, these including the loss of Derry City and West Belfast.

The results in Great Britain were disappointing. Immediately before the General Election the enormous Unionist majority of 1886 had dwindled down to 66; and according to the results of the by-elections there should have been after the elections a Home Rule majority of 120. The *Pall Mall Gazette* expected a majority of 94; the *Times* expected 48; Mr. Gladstone expected 100. Instead of this there was but a majority of 40, counting Parnellites, on the Home Rule side. There were thus 355 Home Rulers—274 Liberals and 81 Nationalists; while the Unionists numbered 315, of whom 269 were Conservatives and 46 Liberal Unionists. For the Home Rulers one of the most disagreeable facts was that Birmingham went solid for Mr. Chamberlain, the ablest and most relentless of their opponents. And it was also of ill omen that both Mr. Morley at Newcastle and Mr. Gladstone at Midlothian were returned by greatly reduced majorities. If, on the one hand, there was a collapse of Parnellism, on the other hand the triumph of Birmingham was equally shown. And the House of Lords would be sure to note that the Unionists had a majority of 71 in England, and of 15 in Great Britain, and that if Home Rule obtained a majority in the House of Commons it would necessarily be by Irish votes.<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Gladstone was deeply mortified. He counted on having at his command such a majority as would strike terror into the House of Lords, and compel its acquiescence, as in the case of the disestablishment of the Irish Church. It was probable that some timid British voters had been frightened by the bogie of an Ulster civil war, and that others had been cajoled by Mr. Chamberlain. But Mr. Gladstone himself laid the blame on Irish dissension. "Until the schism arose," he said to Mr. Morley, "we had every prospect of a majority approaching those of 1868 and 1880. With the death of Mr. Parnell it was supposed that it must perforce close. But

<sup>1</sup> *Annual Register*, pp. 117-22; Morley's *Gladstone*, ii. 731-4; Mr. Stead in *Contemporary Review* for August 1892.

the expectation has been disappointed. The existence and working of it have to no small extent puzzled and bewildered the English people. They cannot comprehend how a quarrel, to them utterly unintelligible, should be allowed to divide the host in the face of the enemy; and their unity and zeal have been deadened in proportion. Herein we see the main cause why our majority is not more than double what it actually numbers, and the difference between these two scales of majority, as I apprehend, is the difference between power to carry the Bill as the Church and Land Bills were carried into law and the default of such power."<sup>1</sup> There were, in fact, many Liberals who thought that Mr. Gladstone should not take office at all, and if he did that he should not introduce a Home Rule Bill, which might not pass the House of Commons and would be certain of defeat in the House of Lords. But Mr. Gladstone had devoted the closing years of his great career to Ireland, and had already satisfied the Irish leaders, Messrs. MacCarthy, Dillon, Healy and Sexton,<sup>2</sup> that a Home Rule Bill would be introduced. When, therefore, Parliament met in August a vote of censure was moved from the Liberal side and carried; the Unionists resigned, and Mr. Gladstone became Prime Minister for the fourth and last time.<sup>3</sup> Mr. Morley again became Chief Secretary for Ireland, Sir William Harcourt Chancellor of the Exchequer, and the Cabinet included also Lords Spencer, Herschell and Rosebery, and Mr. Campbell-Bannerman. One notable addition was made in the person of Mr. Asquith, a brilliant young lawyer, who became Home Secretary. Without much delay a new Home Rule Bill was elaborated, and on the 13th February following it was introduced by Mr. Gladstone.<sup>4</sup>

For two hours and a quarter the great statesman spoke in a House filled to overflowing, every seat occupied, every gallery full; and he spoke with an eloquence and a convincing force marvellous in one of his years.<sup>5</sup> His Bill, like that of 1886,

<sup>1</sup> Morley, ii. 734.

<sup>2</sup> *Annual Register*, p. 109.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 127-37.

<sup>4</sup> Morley's *Gladstone*, ii. 736-7.

<sup>5</sup> *Annual Register*, pp. 31-35.



provided for the establishment of an Irish Parliament with an executive dependent on it. Provision was also made to safeguard Imperial unity, equality between the different nations making up the United Kingdom, the equitable repartition of Imperial burdens, and protection of minorities; and the settlement was to be, if not final, at least "a real and continuing settlement." But while the Bills of 1886 and 1893 thus agreed in principle, they differed somewhat in matters of detail. Instead of two orders sitting together, the new Bill set up a Legislative Council of 48 elected by those rated at £20 or upwards, and a Legislative Assembly elected by existing voters—these two Houses to sit separately. The Legislative Council was specially representative of property, and therefore meant to guard against hasty or ill-considered legislation. But though it might delay, it could not prevent the passing of Bills, and if the Assembly sent up a Bill a second time, after an interval of two years, or after a General Election, the Council could not reject, and must then sit with the Assembly, a majority of both Houses being sufficient for passing the measure so presented. The Council would be elected for eight years, the Assembly for five years. The Viceroy would be an Imperial officer appointed for six years, having power to assent to Bills or to exercise a veto, exercise of the latter right, however, being subject to previous consultation with the Irish Cabinet.

In all purely Irish matters the Irish Parliament would be supreme; but it could endow no religious belief, nor impose restrictions on the profession of any religion, or of none. And it could not touch such questions as peace or war, the army, navy or national defence, the Crown, regency, Viceroyalty, titles and dignities; nor could it interfere with coinage, or with questions of external trade. These were reserved to the Imperial Parliament, the supremacy of which was specially asserted in the Preamble of the Bill. And if the Irish Parliament outstepped the limits of its powers, the Judicial Committee of the English Privy Council, on the initiation of the Irish Viceroy or the English Home Secretary, might declare

that such legislation was *ultra vires*, and therefore must be vetoed as such. For a period of six years Irish Judges would be appointed by the Imperial authority, after which they would be appointed by the Irish executive, holding office in this case as in the former by an irrevocable tenure. The Irish police also would be under Imperial control until a new civil force was enrolled, and this must be done at furthest within a period of six years. The new police force would be under Irish control; but special provision was made as to the pensions of the retiring policemen; and the same sort of provisions were made as to the pensions of retiring judges and civil servants. For three years the Land question was to remain for settlement to the Imperial Parliament, after which if not settled it would pass to the Irish Parliament.

Unlike the measure of 1886, the Bill provided for the retention of the Irish members at Westminster. They were, however, to be reduced to 80; nor were they to vote on purely English or Scotch questions, nor on any tax not levied in Ireland, nor on any appropriation of money except for Imperial services. A schedule of such services was given. The question of the retention or exclusion of Irish members bristled with difficulties, and Mr. Gladstone stated them very fairly and without prejudice. He would leave the matter an open one, satisfied with whatever decision might be come to by Parliament.<sup>1</sup>

On behalf of the Tories Sir Edward Clarke found fault with the proposed arrangement, declaring it to be beyond the wit of man to completely separate local from Imperial questions.<sup>2</sup> Colonel Saunderson was more vehement in his condemnation, complaining that the proposed Irish Parliament would have "the power of plunder without the fear of judgment."<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, Mr. Sexton, speaking on behalf of the Anti-Parnellites, welcomed the Bill as better than that of 1886, though he found grave fault with the financial provisions, which he thought less equitable than those of the former Bill.<sup>4</sup> There

<sup>1</sup> Hansard, ccclxiv. pp. 1241-75.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 1286.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 1331.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* 1327.



was to be no great Imperial officer as provided in 1886 to collect the revenue and transmit the balance to the Irish exchequer after the fixed Imperial contribution from Ireland had been paid. Under the new arrangement the customs alone were reserved for collection by Imperial officers, and would be deemed sufficient as Ireland's contribution to the Imperial Exchequer. All the other items of revenue were to be collected by Irish officers and expended under the control of the Irish executive authority. Mr. Gladstone estimated, after giving the several items of the Irish Budget, that Ireland would have a balance of £500,000 with which to start the work of Irish government. But Mr. Sexton denied the accuracy of these figures. Mr. Redmond's condemnation was more emphatic. From him much was expected by the Unionists. They hoped he would play the game of faction, criticize adversely anything and everything proposed by Mr. Gladstone, and make demands which he knew well could not be conceded. As he did not do this their chagrin was great. He spoke with great eloquence and power, and though he found fault with the financial provisions, with the power of veto given to the English Privy Council, and with the right of the Imperial Parliament to legislate even on purely Irish questions concurrently with the Irish Parliament, he spoke in no carping spirit. He spoke, indeed, throughout as a patriot and a statesman. He spoke with an enthusiasm which was natural of the great work done by Parnell, but he also paid an eloquent tribute to the great Englishman who had devoted to the cause of Ireland the glorious sunset of his days.<sup>1</sup>

After four nights' debate the Bill was read a first time without a division, on the 20th of February. Nearly two months later, on the 6th of April, Mr. Gladstone moved the second reading, and then the big guns on both sides of the House were brought into action. Often indeed the speaking was wearisome, but often also it was on a high level. The *Annual Register* (p. 39) notes that there seemed to be a secret understanding among the Unionists as to the line to be taken.

<sup>1</sup> Hansard, ccclxiv. 1463-80.

The Tories were to resent the treatment meted out to the British taxpayer. The Liberal Unionists were to lay special stress on the danger to the security and prestige of the United Kingdom. The Ulstermen were to protest against the threatened ruin of their province. Certainly there was much said about Ulster. Belfast had become the Mecca of Unionism. Thither went Mr. Balfour in April and Lord Salisbury in May, both to rouse the militant bigotry of Ulster Orangeism.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Chamberlain, Sir Henry James and the Duke of Devonshire also visited the same city, and with the same object as the Tory leaders. And in the House of Commons the voice of Ulster bigotry was self-assertive and loud. Mr. MacCartney and Sir Edward Harland protested against the threatened ruin of a prosperous and progressive province.<sup>2</sup> Mr. Dunbar Barton spoke of armed resistance, and seems to have contemplated a sentence of penal servitude for himself.<sup>3</sup> Mr. T. W. Russell was not behindhand in strong language. As for Colonel Saunderson, there was no limit to the extravagance of his oratory. He declared that Ulster would certainly fight rather than be subject to a Parliament controlled by Dr. Walsh, the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin; nor would a loyal and high-spirited province bear to be governed by disloyal and dishonest men. And he predicted all sorts of evils in addition to armed insurrection — confusion in the law courts, impotence in the executive, smuggling along the coast.<sup>4</sup>

From the Irish benches these objections were met by Mr. Blake, Mr. Redmond, Mr. Davitt and Mr. Sexton. Mr. Blake's was a calmly-reasoned speech made by one who had held high office in Canada, and had therefore practical experience of the beneficent effects of Home Rule.<sup>5</sup> Mr. Redmond welcomed the Bill, while solemnly protesting against its financial provisions.<sup>6</sup> Mr. Davitt's speech was specially noteworthy, and made a deep impression on the House. The rebel and Fenian, under the influence of Mr. Gladstone's conciliatory policy, had

<sup>1</sup> *Annual Register*, pp. 305-7.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> Hansard, iii. 407-23.

<sup>2</sup> Hansard.

<sup>4</sup> Hansard, iv. 856 *et seq.*

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* 234-52.



turned to constitutional ways. The prisoner of Dartmoor, who had spent so many years of his life in the loneliness and privation of an English prison cell, spoke without a trace of bitterness. Forgiving and forgetting all he had suffered, he welcomed the Bill, with all its safeguards and restrictions, as a final settlement between two nations long estranged.<sup>1</sup> In pointing to the fact that the Catholic Corporation of Dublin had sent its Protestant Lord Mayor to Parliament with a petition in favour of Mr. Gladstone's Bill, Mr. Sexton could retort on Colonel Saunderson that the claim of Ulster was not for freedom or equality, but for domination and ascendancy. For it was well known that the Belfast Corporation was a bigoted body, which would admit no Catholic to its employment or its honours. Nor had Mr. Sexton any difficulty in exposing Mr. Chamberlain's financial inaccuracies. Like Mr. Redmond and Mr. Davitt, he accepted the Bill, and believed it would put an end to the strife of ages.<sup>2</sup>

In moving the second reading, Mr. Gladstone specially emphasized the fact that under existing conditions the British Parliament was unable to do its work. He pointed out that Ireland had been discontented ever since the Union; and on the other hand, that in every British colony the grant of self-government had always brought loyalty and contentment in its train.<sup>3</sup> Sir M. Hicks-Beach, who followed him, indulged much in prophecy. The Bill did not safeguard British supremacy; it would lead to fresh demands from a discontented and an unsatisfied Ireland; it would allow the Irish members to still dominate the Parliament of Westminster, even while masters of the Parliament at Dublin. The Bill, he said, "is not a union; it is not a federation; it is not colonial self-government; it is a bastard combination of the three."<sup>4</sup> Mr. Chamberlain was more vehement in his condemnation and less scrupulous. He objected to everything in the Bill—the safeguards for Imperial supremacy and the rights of minorities, the financial arrangements, the veto, and above all he objected to give

<sup>1</sup> Hansard, iv. 42-62.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* iii. 1597-1620.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 785-824.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* 1620-42.

Ireland over to the Irish Nationalist leaders, whom he abhorred and denounced.<sup>1</sup> On the same side, and with a good deal of exaggeration, Lord Randolph Churchill spoke, as did Mr. Goschen and Sir Henry James. Mr. Goschen was clever and argumentative, and speaking as a financial expert, severely and skilfully criticized the financial arrangements in the Bill.<sup>2</sup> And Sir Henry James made much of the fact that Mr. Parnell had accepted as a final settlement the Bill of 1886, and yet four years later had attacked both the Bill and its author.<sup>3</sup>

From the Liberal benches an answer came from Mr. Morley. His speech was able and eloquent as became one whose diction was always so select, and who was so much a master of the subject. Both Mr. Chamberlain and Lord Randolph Churchill he handled severely, and the Duke of Devonshire's recent appeal to the past in his Belfast speech he described as "an incoherent and ignorant perversion of history."<sup>4</sup> But a still more brilliant speech from the Liberal benches was that of Mr. Asquith, the Home Secretary. Clothed in highly felicitous language, it was argumentative and convincing, and produced a marked effect on all who heard it. If the Irish people were so black as they had been painted by the Unionists, they deserved instead of Home Rule to be disfranchised. Yet they were given the franchise in 1885, and Mr. Chamberlain in that year was prepared to give them local government, which differed little from Home Rule. Mr. Asquith scoffed at the notion that Imperial supremacy was insufficiently safeguarded in the Bill; and he understood by supremacy "not the power or practice of meddling or peddling interference with the details of Irish legislation or administration, but a real power which might be used in grave emergencies" should such arise. "It is," he said, "taxing our credulity to ask us to believe that a power which has expressly reserved to itself under the Bill the executive authority, which has complete and absolute control of the whole of the military and naval forces of the Crown, which can call upon the officers of

<sup>1</sup> Hansard, vii. 1830-57.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* iv. 462-83.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 912-39.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* 629-57.



the Irish executive to carry out its decrees, and which, in case of default by them, can appoint officers of its own for the purpose—it is taxing our credulity to ask us to believe that a power so endowed and equipped will not be able to enforce to the last extent every power it possesses.”<sup>1</sup>

On the 21st of April, the twelfth night of the debate, Mr. Balfour summed up for the Opposition. A keen debater, he made his points with the skill of the practised dialectician. Denying that the Union had failed or that coercion had failed, he denied that either Imperial supremacy or the interests of Ulster were sufficiently safeguarded in the Bill, and he denied that the police and civil servants were being treated with justice. He predicted that Irish discontent would not be allayed; that there would be fresh demands made in the future, seeing that the Irish Parliament was prohibited from dealing with religion and education and trade; that there would be confusion and civil war; and he warned the Irish Nationalists of the folly of cutting off their country—a poor country—from access to British credit.<sup>2</sup> Then came the final scene, when Mr. Gladstone rose in a full House just as the clock tolled the hour of midnight. Summing up all that his opponents had said, he described it as consisting of bold assertion, persistent exaggeration, constant misconstruction, copious, arbitrary and boundless prophecy; and he gave examples of how these various weapons had been used. He declared himself quite satisfied with the speeches of the Irish leaders, considering them as sufficient acceptance of the measure on the part of the Irish people. He was specially pleased with the speech of Mr. Redmond. But, on the other hand, he had strong language of condemnation for the speeches made by Mr. Chamberlain and Sir Henry James—speeches in which distrust of Ireland, hatred of her leaders, and incitement to Ulster bigotry were but too apparent.<sup>3</sup> When the division was taken, 347 voted for the Bill and 304 against it. Mr. Gladstone had therefore triumphed, and the verdict of 1886 was reversed.

But the Bill had many dangers yet to face, and in Committee

<sup>1</sup> Hansard, iv. 335-61.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 968-97.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 992-1006.

only the greatest care could avert disaster. The Committee stage began on the 4th of May. The Unionists declared their determination to kill the Bill, and for this purpose had recourse to every form of obstruction. Amendments were moved, long speeches made, every clause and every line was fought over; and such was the slow progress made that after twenty-eight nights only four clauses had been passed. To economize time the Irish leaders said little. But Mr. Balfour and others on his side said much, Mr. Chamberlain most of all. With tireless energy and sleepless vigilance he watched and delayed progress, satisfied if he could only wear down Mr. Gladstone. A motion was at last passed to have the Bill closed by compartments, and only thus was the Committee stage got through. In general the Liberals and Nationalists held well together, but there were times when the forces of the Opposition all but prevailed. On the 30th of May a Unionist amendment was defeated only by 21 votes; the 6th clause had but a majority of 15; and the 9th clause only 14.<sup>1</sup> On this latter clause Unionists and Parnellites coalesced. But the combination did not endure, and on the 30th of August the third reading of the Bill was carried by a majority of 34. Though voting with the majority, Mr. Redmond made an injudicious speech, which delighted the enemies of Home Rule and disheartened its friends. He declared the Bill was worse than when it had entered Committee; that no man in his senses could regard it as a satisfactory settlement of Ireland's claims; that the word "provisional" was stamped in red ink across every page.<sup>2</sup>

In the House of Lords the Bill was treated with scant courtesy. On the second reading its rejection was moved by the Duke of Devonshire, and in a house of 460 only 41 voted for the Bill.<sup>3</sup> Thus was the representative assembly of the nation flouted by a body non-representative and reactionary. Two other important measures had also occupied the attention of Parliament in the session of 1893—the Employers' Liability

<sup>1</sup> Hansard, vii. 1031, 1192.

<sup>2</sup> *Annual Register*, p. 92; T. D. Sullivan, pp. 341-2.

<sup>3</sup> *Annual Register*, p. 228.



Bill and the Parish Councils Bill. Both were sent up to the Lords, and there they were amended out of all recognition. All remonstrance from the House of Commons was unavailing in the case of the Employers' Liability Bill, and the Government in consequence abandoned it. To a small extent the Lords yielded on the Parish Councils Bill, and that Bill became law, not, however, without strong language in the House of Commons. Mr. Gladstone was specially indignant at seeing the hard labours of the longest session on record thus nullified in a few hours by the prejudice and obstinacy of a non-representative body. After the rejection of the Home Rule Bill he spoke out at Edinburgh, telling his audience that a determined nation could not be thwarted by a phalanx of 500 peers who bore high-sounding titles and sat in a gilded chamber. And he promised that in the next session Home Rule would again appear above the waves amid which it had for the moment seemed to founder.<sup>1</sup> The Lords' treatment of the Employers' Liability Bill and the Parish Councils Bill still further intensified Mr. Gladstone's indignation against the Peers, and his last speech in Parliament was an attack on them. The question, he said, was "whether the judgment of the House of Lords is to annihilate the whole work of the House of Commons. The issue which is raised between a deliberative assembly elected by the votes of six millions of people, and a deliberative assembly occupied by many men of virtue, by many men of talent, of course with considerable diversities and varieties, is a controversy which, when once raised, must go forward to an issue."<sup>2</sup>

The fact was that Mr. Gladstone was satisfied that the House of Lords must be fought, and that a suitable opportunity to fight the Peers had come. He was then very old, his hearing was bad, his sight was dim and he was threatened with total blindness, and any other man would have sought for repose, weighed down as he was with the infirmities of age. But his mental faculties were still unimpaired, as was shown by the skill with which he had piloted the Home Rule Bill through the House of Commons; and the appeal of a man who had

<sup>1</sup> *Annual Register*, pp. 228-9.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* for 1894, p. 54.

spent sixty years in the public service would have been hard to resist. Some of Mr. Gladstone's colleagues were with him, but others had little enthusiasm for Home Rule, and wanted no dissolution and no crusade against the House of Lords. In consequence the old warrior resolved to retire from the field. In February 1894 he made his last speech in the House of Commons, then resigned the Premiership, and soon after resigned his seat in Parliament. Lord Rosebery succeeded him as Prime Minister, and Home Rule, which was to have appeared above the waves, remained submerged.<sup>1</sup>

The outlook in Ireland grew dark. The violence of the Parnellites at the General Election in 1892, their attacks on meetings, their liberal use of sticks and stones and insults was not easily forgotten. On the other hand, some of the more thoughtless and younger clergy, especially in Meath, had gone far beyond the limits of prudence or fair-play, with the result that the two members elected for Meath had been unseated on petition. The recollection of these things remained, and though Parnellite and Anti-Parnellite members fought together on the Home Rule Bill, they refused to coalesce. Nor did the Anti-Parnellites themselves put their house in order. The directorate of the *Freeman's Journal* continued to furnish subject for debate and disunion. A majority of the Irish members decided that the party as such should no longer interfere in the affairs of that newspaper. Mr. Sexton, however, did not agree, and threatened to retire from public life if this resolution were not rescinded. Rescinded it was, for the country could not lose the services of such a man with the Home Rule Bill in Committee; but the decisions of the party were thus discredited and the affairs of a Dublin newspaper were still left for further debate.<sup>2</sup> Mr. Dillon continued to think that Mr. Healy aimed at too much power. Mr. Healy retorted that Mr. Dillon was a political boss, controlling the party funds, controlling the *Freeman's Journal*, rigging conventions for the selection of Parliamentary candidates. Nor could Mr. Dillon deny that he was one of the National Treasurers

<sup>1</sup> Morley's *Gladstone*, ii. 744-5.

<sup>2</sup> Healy, pp. 80-81.



and that Mr. Healy was not. And Mr. Dillon's conduct at a convention at Castlebar in the end of July 1893 was violently assailed. In defiance of the usage that no member should preside at a convention in his own county, he presided at Castlebar. In spite of the fact that he had at the beginning of the meeting taken no exception to the composition of the convention and no pains to test the credentials of the delegates, he dissolved the meeting after it had sat for some time, on the plea that it was irregularly constituted, and undoubtedly some had been admitted who had no right to be there. Then he adjourned the meeting to Westport, where the nominee of the party rather than the local nominee was selected. The selected candidate, Dr. Ambrose, was a sturdy Nationalist, and an honest man, just as his opponent, Colonel Blake, was, and it may be that had Dr. Ambrose's claim been adequately put forward at Castlebar he might have been adopted there. Mr. Dillon, always distrustful of landlords, was evidently reluctant to have the local candidate, and thus left himself open to Mr. Healy's accusation that he was rigging conventions for the advancement of his own personal ambition.<sup>1</sup> A few months later Mr. Healy was turned off the directorate of the *Freeman's Journal*. Disgusted at the turn of affairs, Mr. Murrogh, one of the members for Cork and a liberal subscriber to Nationalist funds, resigned his seat, as did Mr. John Barry, M.P. for Wexford, an old and tried Nationalist; large numbers of the clergy and local leaders withdrew from the movement altogether; and the National Federation had to count on fewer working branches and a lessened income.<sup>2</sup>

It was probably the apathy and indifference which had followed in the wake of dissension which caused the Nationalist leaders to neglect their obvious duty when Mr. Gladstone resigned. Had the choice of his successor been left to the Liberal members they would probably have fixed on Sir William Harcourt; and he ought to have been acceptable in Ireland, for he had fought the Home Rule battle for years with conspicuous energy and ability. Mr. Gladstone himself

<sup>1</sup> Healy, pp. 83-86.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 101.

wished to have Lord Spencer, a staunch Home Ruler. But the Queen, who had little love for Ireland and none at all for Home Rule, selected Lord Rosebery. As a Liberal he was a very mild type indeed. In November 1885 Lord Randolph Churchill suggested that the Whigs should be won over from Home Rule, that in a composite Cabinet Hartington should get the Indian Secretaryship, Goschen the Home Office, and Rosebery the Scotch Office.<sup>1</sup> This, however, was not done, and though Rosebery did not secede with Hartington and Goschen in the following year, he gave little help to Mr. Gladstone in the years of stress and battle which followed. By the Unionists<sup>2</sup> he was welcomed to the Premiership as one "who had done nothing to imperil British prestige abroad or to show his sympathy with Home Rule at home." As the biographer and apologist of Pitt, he had no disapproval for Pitt's Union policy, and disagreed with Mr. Gladstone's condemnation of the baseness and blackguardism of the Union. And on the second reading of the Home Rule Bill in the Lords he declared that though he was a witness, he was not an enthusiastic witness in favour of Home Rule. "With me at any rate Home Rule is not a fanaticism, nor a question of sentiment, scarcely even a question of history."<sup>3</sup>

The Irish Party had, of course, no right to dictate to the Liberals as to the selection of a Liberal leader. But if Mr. Gladstone in November 1890 had a right to point out that Parnell's continuance in the Irish leadership would wreck Home Rule, the Irish Party in 1894 had an equal right to point out that they could not support a Liberal Premier who had no desire to advance the cause of Home Rule. Had Parnell lived it is more than likely that he would have chastised Lord Rosebery by promptly turning him out of office. Mr. Parnell's successors, however, were not so exacting. Mr. T. P. O'Connor described Rosebery's speech in the Lords as just the sort that would favourably impress the House of

<sup>1</sup> *Churchill's Life*, ii. 6—private letter to Salisbury.

<sup>2</sup> *Annual Register*, p. 60.

<sup>3</sup> Hansard; Lucy's *Diary of the Home Rule Parliament*, pp. 319-20.



Lords and the British public, and professed to be satisfied with it himself.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Davitt preferred Lord Rosebery to Sir William Harcourt. Mr. Dillon at Clonmel (11th February 1894) deprecated suspecting the Liberal leaders, suspicion being "the mark of a timid and cowardly nature." The *Freeman's Journal*, however, wisely suggested that assurances should be sought by the Irish leaders, and Mr. Healy urged the same in a letter to Mr. MacCarthy. The latter wrote to Lord Rosebery, but was not vouchsafed either an interview or a reply, and a few days later the new Premier publicly declared that before "Home Rule is conceded by the Imperial Parliament, England, as the predominant partner, will have to be convinced of its justice."<sup>2</sup> Frightened at the flutter created by these words in the minds of the Irish Nationalists, Lord Rosebery, on the 17th of March, in a speech at Edinburgh, partly retraced his steps. Mr. John Dillon, who was present, hastened to say to his countrymen in the Scotch capital that for himself he was satisfied with the speech; he was deeply and firmly convinced that in Lord Rosebery Ireland had an honest and an honourable champion, who would be false to no pledge given by that great man whose place he had stepped into so courageously. Nor could Mr. Dillon be blamed for his estimate of Lord Rosebery, when Lord Rosebery's words are remembered.<sup>3</sup> Others of the party, however, remained sceptical and suspicious. Nor could it be denied that Mr. Redmond

<sup>1</sup> *Sketches in the House*, pp. 277-8.

<sup>2</sup> Healy, pp. 90-91.

<sup>3</sup> *Annual Register*, pp. 77-79. "On the first night of the session," said Lord Rosebery, "I had occasion to deal with the Irish question . . . and my critics admit that I dealt with it with almost too much perspicacity. But unfortunately the interpretation that they put on my words was not that which I put upon them in my intention. What I said was that if we wanted to carry Home Rule we must carry conviction to the heart of England, and by these words I stand. They are a truism, a platitude in the sense in which I uttered them; but in the sense in which they have been interpreted they bear a meaning which I as a Scotsman should be the first to repudiate. Are we really to believe that in all the great measures which affect the United Kingdom we are to wait the predominant vote of England? . . . We do not propose to sit on the banks of the stream of time and watch that stream pass by until it shall run dry in an English

accurately summed up the situation in April 1894 as one in which Ireland was almost face to face with the ruin of the Home Rule cause, "in a position of disunion, squalid and humiliating personal altercations, and petty vanities."<sup>1</sup>

Unfortunately for Ireland, the personal altercations continued. Mr. Arthur O'Connor, one of the ablest of the Irish Party, was turned out of his position as Secretary. Mr. Healy, at a convention in Liverpool (in May 1894), evidently referring to Mr. Dillon, protested that he did not machine conventions, nor draft resolutions for branches, nor go through the length and breadth of the land attacking his colleagues. Mr. Davitt at the same time and place retorted that no man would be allowed to wreck the movement under the pretext of combating "bossism," which was simply a manufactured bogey.<sup>2</sup> A few months later it was rumoured that Parnellites and Dillonites were about to unite to crush Mr. Healy. But Mr. Redmond repudiated any such alliance and attacked both Mr. Dillon and Mr. Sexton; while Mr. Harrington attacked Mr. O'Brien, avowing on the latter's authority that the situation could have been saved at Boulogne in 1891 had not Dillon been ambitious to succeed Parnell in the chair.<sup>3</sup> Meantime the Nationalist coffers were empty, and subscriptions to the party funds were readily received from leading English Liberals. Owing to protests from Mr. T. D. Sullivan and others, these subscriptions were very properly returned; for a party sustained by British gold would have no claim to be called independent.<sup>4</sup>

Legislation during this period there was none. Faced by a strong opposition led by such able debaters as Mr. Balfour and Mr. Chamberlain, discredited by their losses at by-elections, almost unrepresented in the House of Lords, the Government was impotent. A Registration Bill and a Welsh

majority? . . . I must point out that if I had meant that an English majority was necessary to the passing of Home Rule I should have been uttering what on the face of it is an absurdity" (*Times*, March 19, 1894).

<sup>1</sup> *Annual Register*, p. 206.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 207-8.

<sup>3</sup> Healy, pp. 111-12.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* 103-6, 109-10.



Disestablishment Bill were introduced in 1894, but neither became law ; nor did the Welsh Bill when reintroduced in the following year ;<sup>1</sup> nor did an Irish Evicted Tenants Bill or an Irish Land Bill, though the former reached the Lords and the latter passed its second reading without a division.<sup>2</sup> The Unionist vote of censure in February 1895 was defeated by only 14 votes.<sup>3</sup> Confident of victory, they clamoured for a General Election, and stopped all legislation. Nothing was done for Ireland except the appointment of some popular magistrates and of a Commission to investigate what were the financial relations between Ireland and Great Britain. The Parnellites, like the Unionists, wanted a dissolution ; but the Anti-Parnellites continued to support the Government in passing Bills which it was well known the Lords would reject. This was called the policy of "filling up the cup" against the Lords. As for the agitation against the Upper House, it was never taken seriously, for nobody believed that Lord Rosebery wanted the abolition or even the reform of the House of Lords. In June the Government were defeated and resigned office. Lord Salisbury again became Premier, Mr. Balfour Leader in the Commons, Mr. Chamberlain Colonial Secretary. In July there was a dissolution, and when the last elections were over it was found that 411 Unionists, 177 Liberals, 70 Nationalists and 12 Parnellites had been returned. This gave the Unionists a majority of 152, the largest obtained at any election since 1832.<sup>4</sup> Even such prominent men as Sir William Harcourt and Mr. John Morley had been defeated. Ireland was again disheartened, and the Home Rule cause was in the dust.

<sup>1</sup> *Annual Register* for 1894, pp. 87-88, 104 ; for 1895, p. 88.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* for 1894, p. 124 ; for 1895, p. 99.      <sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 34.      <sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* 153-8.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### *Years of Strife*

IN the autumn of 1895 Liberal politicians were busily engaged in trying to account for the disasters of the recent election. They owed their defeat to Welsh Disestablishment, to local veto, to the opposition of Beer and Bible, or, as others put it, to Gin and Gospel; they were beaten on Home Rule and on the question of the House of Lords; they had lost because they no longer fought under Gladstone.<sup>1</sup> Beaten they certainly were, and a Government with a majority of 152 was not likely to be soon displaced from power. One result of the change was that Home Rule had disappeared. The Liberal Unionists had come back in renewed strength; their leaders, Devonshire, Chamberlain, Goschen and James, had taken office, and these were far more Anti-Irish than the Tories themselves. Not even the Ulster Orangemen had attacked so severely the Nationalist leaders as Mr. Chamberlain. From a Government in which he held a commanding position the Irish had little to hope. This was evident when the new Ministers met the House of Commons in August. Though the assembling of Parliament was merely to wind up the business of the year and its sittings were not prolonged, many subjects were nevertheless touched upon: the evicted tenants and agricultural depression, Egypt and Uganda, the atrocities in Armenia and the massacres in China. But of Home Rule there was nothing, except a declaration from the Government that it would be firmly opposed. There was no promise even of Local Government for Ireland. But the Chief Secretary, Mr. Gerald Balfour, promised that an Irish Land Bill would be introduced

<sup>1</sup> *Annual Register*, pp. 182-6.



in the next session. No further measures apparently were to be introduced, and it was disheartening for the Home Rulers to find that Lord Rosebery again repeated his "predominant partner" speech, declaring in the House of Lords that Ireland could not get or expect Home Rule until England was convinced of its justice.<sup>1</sup> Nor did Lord Rosebery stand alone. The late Home Rule Lord-Lieutenant, Lord Crewe, had no hesitation in saying that he "thought the importance of Home Rule had been greatly exaggerated." He added that the continuance of Irish dissension was having a most injurious effect on British public opinion.<sup>2</sup>

The serious, even fatal character of these dissensions compelled Mr. MacCarthy to say in a public speech that if unity was not restored "Irishmen must give up any idea of Home Rule for the present generation."<sup>3</sup> And yet the year 1895 came and went without any unity being reached. The Parnellites, stubbornly resisting all invitations, would have nothing to do with a party numbering among its leaders such men as Mr. Dillon, "whose shallow and selfish ambition was, with Mr. Sexton's conceit, mainly responsible for the Parnell tragedy."<sup>4</sup> Instead of peace these Parnellites professed war, and at the General Election they fought the Anti-Parnellites with great determination, and having captured from them three seats, emerged from the contest stronger and more determined than ever.

The Anti-Parnellites won Derry City from the Tories, and were therefore 70 after the General Election, compared with 72 at the dissolution. But though their numbers remained practically unchanged, their strength was seriously impaired by internal divisions. As in 1892, the trouble came chiefly from the rivalries of Mr. Healy and Mr. Dillon. Mr. Dillon's friends declared that nothing could satisfy Mr. Healy, that he was bent on ruining the party, dominated by a spirit of faction which nothing could exorcise. Mr. Healy's friends, on the other hand, blamed Mr. Dillon, who was intriguing for the

<sup>1</sup> *Annual Register*, pp. 164-74.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 201.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 202.

<sup>4</sup> *Independent*, February 2, 1895.

chair and wished to crush Mr. Healy, believing him to be the chief obstacle to his ambition. This, however, is not an accurate presentiment of the case. Incompatible in temper, with different points of view and different intellectual gifts, no doubt personal antipathy was largely responsible for keeping them apart. But they were separated also on matters of policy, especially as to the management of the National Party and the general conduct of the National movement. Mr. Dillon seems to have had a dread of anything like clerical predominance, believing that such would injure the Irish cause in Great Britain, and this partly, at least, explains his anxiety to win over the Parnellites. As in Parnell's time, he wanted to have the clergy on the one hand and the Fenians on the other acting together. Mr. Healy had lost all hope of conciliating the Parnellites, and wanted to fight them and beat them. He was satisfied that this could be done by the aid of the priests, who as a body were quite as patriotic as the Parnellites or Fenians. And he felt it was bad policy to lose the support of the priests, knowing well that no national movement could succeed without them. Mr. Healy's view also was that conventions for the selection of Parliamentary candidates should be thoroughly representative, and should be left free from needless interference on the part of members of Parliament. Mr. Dillon favoured the system in existence under Parnell, when conventions were indeed representative, yet were controlled by the Parliamentary managers. It had, on the whole, worked well, and in freeing men from local influences had made a homogeneous party animated rather by national than by local patriotism. But it engendered not a few complaints, and had introduced men into the party who were undesirable and incompetent—men who brought little credit to the party and were of little advantage to the public service. Mr. Healy would have the party funds to some extent controlled from outside; Mr. Dillon would have them controlled by the party itself, and necessarily<sup>1</sup> also by a few within the party. A National Convention ought to have been called, Mr. Healy thought, before the General Election, so

<sup>1</sup> *Freeman*, Nov. 5, 1894.



as to formulate a National policy. Mr. Dillon preferred to have the conduct of the General Election delegated to a small Committee within the party, from which Mr. Healy and his friends were excluded.<sup>1</sup> Finally, Mr. Healy was willing to accept concessions from the Tories just as he would from the Liberals. Mr. Dillon looked askance at the Tories, and in the Liberals placed his hopes. Mr. Dillon's strength lay in the fact that most of the experienced men of the party, as well as a small majority of the whole members, shared his views. But Mr. Healy also had powerful support within the party, and his objections as to the character of the conventions, the interference of the party in such conventions, and the control of the National funds were shared by large numbers among the constituents. So able a man, they thought, was worth conciliating. Had his objections been fairly met, and had he in spite of this persevered in a policy of faction, his supporters would have dwindled and he could have been easily crushed. But no serious attempt was made to meet his objections, and it was this, in addition to his vast ability, which made him so strong.

At the General Election the divergent views of Mr. Dillon and Mr. Healy came into violent conflict, and were responsible for some painful scenes. In Kilkenny City the candidate selected, who was favourable to Mr. Healy, got no assistance from the Electoral Committee of the party, and the seat was lost to the Parnellites. East Wicklow was also lost owing to the same cause.<sup>2</sup> At the Convention in South Monaghan, Mr. Dillon attended and insisted on his right to take the chair. The delegates, or a majority of them, insisted on having a local priest, Canon Hoey, one of the most respected and patriotic priests in Ulster, and as Mr. Dillon refused to yield, he was assailed with cries of "No dictation," "No bossism," "A free convention." Ultimately, after a display of passion and disorder which were certainly not the heralds of unity and peace, a compromise was agreed to, and Dean Birmingham was voted to the chair.<sup>3</sup> Mr. Dillon also proceeded to Donegal and presided at the Convention there, hoping, says Mr. Healy,

<sup>1</sup> Healy, p. 116.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 120.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 119.

to oust from their seats Mr. Arthur O'Connor and Mr. T. D. Sullivan.

In Mayo the chairman was Mr. Edward Blake. In three divisions there was no interference from the party and no contest. But in North Mayo there was trouble with the late Healyite sitting member, Mr. Crilly. His record in the practical work of legislation was not specially brilliant, and his constituents were not particularly anxious for the retention of his services. A few weeks before the Convention, the Bishop of Killala, Dr. Conmy, and his priests had occasion to send their subscriptions to the Irish Party fund, and were quite ready to accept any suggestions as to the choice of their future member. But their subscriptions were not even acknowledged, and not a word was conveyed to them that Mr. Crilly ought to be replaced by a better man. On the day of the Convention, therefore, the North Mayo delegates, lay and cleric, came to Castlebar to support their late sitting member. Mr. Blake was an impartial chairman, and all would have proceeded smoothly but for the intervention of Mr. William O'Brien. He was then member for Cork City, and an old personal friend of Mr. Dillon. They had stood together on many a platform, had faced together many a danger, had shared together the privations of imprisonment, and the first book Mr. O'Brien wrote he dedicated to his dear old friend, "in memory of anxious years and glorious hopes." As an ardent follower of Mr. Dillon he had said many things of Mr. Healy that were hard and bitter; yet he had to bow to public opinion in Cork and accept Mr. Healy's brother Maurice as his Parliamentary colleague. But he would strike elsewhere, and travelling from Cork by a night train, he reached Castlebar in time for the Convention, and attacked Mr. Crilly as a follower and supporter of Mr. T. M. Healy, and as such unworthy to be the representative of North Mayo. There are few men equal to Mr. O'Brien as a platform orator. His fiery energy, his rapid eloquence, his vehemence and earnestness of tone and gesture are all-powerful with an Irish crowd, and on this occasion his energy was at fever heat, his words came forth like the lava tide. Not in Ireland was



there a more public-spirited or more patriotic body of priests than the priests of Killala, and at the Convention they represented their Bishop, who was as public-spirited and as patriotic as themselves. Yet, under the influence of Mr. O'Brien's excited rhetoric, they were hissed and hooted, and as they and the lay delegates from North Mayo left the Convention hall in solemn protest, the hooting and groaning continued. As for Mr. Crilly, he was not even heard, and was, of course, rejected. Mr. O'Brien was more than satisfied, and gleefully declared that "they had sent that day a message of unity and discipline that would ring throughout the world."<sup>1</sup> But the North Mayo delegates were determined men. As a protest against clamour and violence and dictation, they would have nothing to do with the nominee of the Convention, and Mr. Crilly in due course became M.P. for North Mayo.

What took place at Omagh attracted even more attention than what took place at Castlebar. Mr. Dillon was in the chair, the Convention having been called to select candidates for South, Mid and East Tyrone. No delegates were present or had been invited from North Tyrone. Asked why this was so, Mr. Dillon was not very explicit in his answer. But Mr. Healy, who was present, gave the reason. There was, he said, a secret treaty with the Liberals by which, in consideration of a sum of £200 a year for registration purposes, North Tyrone was to be considered a Liberal seat. This treaty had been made through Mr. Blake, acting on the part of the Parliamentary Committee, but without consultation with the party; and it had been made when North Tyrone, by Nationalist money and Nationalist effort in the work of registration, was already a Nationalist seat. The sensation created by this disclosure was great and did much harm to the Home Rule cause throughout Great Britain. Charged with once again playing the game of faction, and even with treason to the National cause, Mr. Healy replied that he had no other time or place to make his protest, and that in making it before a private meeting of Tyrone delegates he had no

<sup>1</sup> Healy, p. 117.

intention of making it public, and thought that privacy had been sufficiently secured. Recalling the case of Dungarvan in 1846, when O'Connell, against the protests of the Young Irelanders, had given a Repeal seat to a Whig place-hunter, and recalling the evils which followed, Mr. Healy avowed that his intention was to rescue the National movement in 1895 from the reproaches and disaster which the affair at Dungarvan had brought upon O'Connell and Repeal.<sup>1</sup> Not many will be found to defend the time selected for the disclosure by Mr. Healy, just in the middle of a General Election. But it is not easy to defend the bargain he condemned. It ought not to have been made with any British party, least of all with a party under the leadership of Lord Rosebery. The Irish Party, at all events, were not prepared to approve of it, or to condemn Mr. Healy, and when the usual ballot took place for the members of the Parliamentary Committee, he was, jointly with Mr. Dillon, placed at the head of the poll. Shortly after, however, he interfered in the South Kerry election, because, as he said, the Convention had been called irregularly and in the interests of Mr. Dillon. For this offence, following on the Omagh disclosures, he was before the close of the year expelled from the Committee of the Irish Party, from the executive of the Irish National League of Great Britain, and from the executive of the Irish National Federation.<sup>2</sup>

In the beginning of 1896 Mr. MacCarthy retired from the Chairmanship of the party. A literary man with a taste for politics, he was much at home in the House of Commons and liked the life there. But though possessed of courage and capacity, he was reluctant to assert himself, and was quite unable to suppress the rivalries and jealousies with which his party was rent and torn. He did not, however, take a despairing view of the future, and in the letter in which he announced his retirement he said that, after all, these rivalries were merely personal, and would not and did not "affect the vote of a single Irish Nationalist in the House of Commons when any Irish interest was concerned."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Healy, pp. 122-6.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 133-5.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 141.



All eyes were then turned on Mr. Sexton. He had taken no part in hunting down Healy, and in consequence had given little offence. In Parliament he could more than hold his own even against Chamberlain and Balfour, and now that Gladstone was gone he was its greatest orator. Interpreting the voice of the country, the Irish Party elected him unanimously to the vacant chair. But the difficulty was with Mr. Sexton himself; for he had ceased attending Parliament, and had announced in July 1895 that he would not return to it. "So far as concerns genuine service to the country," he said, "I am convinced that at present I may just as well be out of Parliament as in it. Why should I deliberately associate myself with evils beyond my control, and incur responsibility for consequences which I may foresee, but have no competence to avert?" The unanimous vote of the whole party, it was thought, would change his views, for it would be hard to resist such a call when made for the sake of Ireland. To smooth his path still more, Mr. Healy wrote him the following letter:—

HOUSE OF COMMONS,  
14th Feb. 1896.

DEAR SEXTON—It has been suggested to me by some colleagues with whom I have been in close communication that a friendly note from me might have the effect of dissuading you from finally declining the honour which all of us recently united to pay you. I gladly comply with their wish, because the moments of difference between us are as nothing in contrast with the long years of comradeship through which we have worked side by side.

The knowledge of the further perplexities which would take root in the party if you persist in your attitude should, I would urge, outweigh entirely the very natural desire for rest which your unstinted and unremitting labours have brought upon you. Moreover, with your acceptance of the Chairmanship I believe harmony would be restored in our ranks, and the country with renewed confidence would cheerfully rally to the support of its representatives in the struggle against Toryism which is before us. If my withdrawal from the party would purchase your acceptance, it is needless to say what pleasure it would afford me to consult at the same time the national interests and my private convenience.

On the other hand, if, as I assume, the assurance of hearty and

friendly co-operation would be more acceptable to you, it gives me great pleasure to say that amongst those for whom I may be allowed to speak there exists only one feeling, namely, a desire to make your tenure of the chair agreeable as well as honourable to you, well knowing the capacity and genius you bring to the service of the movement.

While I write to you under a sense of public obligation in view of the circumstances of the country, it is gratifying also to make this communication as a tribute to yourself in faint acknowledgment of the brilliant services to the common cause to which I have been so long a witness. I shall take the liberty of publishing this letter in the press, in the hope that it may interpose an additional difficulty in your way to making a further refusal.—Faithfully yours,

T. M. HEALY.<sup>1</sup>

Those who believed Mr. Healy an incurable factionist did not hesitate to say that he wrote in mockery and in insincerity. But all fair-minded Irishmen believed that he was earnest and sincere. Mr. Sexton, however, was obdurate. He had already declined the honour offered to him by the party, and now he repeated his refusal to Mr. Healy in a not too gracious reply. The country felt annoyed and surprised. Nor was it easy to understand why a man of such gifts should prefer an obscure position in Dublin to a proud position in a great assembly, where his talents, while serving the country he loved, would have attracted the admiration of the world.

Then Mr. Dillon was elected to the chair. His election was not unanimous; but in returning thanks he declared he would be no majority Chairman, but the Chairman of the whole party, and that under his Chairmanship every man in the party would get fair-play.<sup>2</sup> These were honest words and were honestly intended, and yet many who voted for Dillon must have asked themselves was he, after all, the best selection they could have made. His personal character indeed was above reproach. He had inherited his father's best qualities—his sympathy for the poor, his hatred of oppression, his deep love of country, his courage, his self-sacrifice. Every one knew that John Dillon had been in prison for Ireland, and that, had Ireland demanded

<sup>1</sup> Healy, pp. 146-7.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 147.



or required it, he would just as readily have mounted the scaffold. Nor could his bitterest enemy deny his right to be called, as he often was, Honest John Dillon. But he could be all this and not be the best selection for the chair of the Irish Party in 1896. For one thing, the Parnellites would not serve under him; and cordial co-operation with Mr. Healy and his friends was not to be expected after the events of the last few years. Indeed, Mr. Dillon was quite unable to conciliate opposition. Like Parnell, he had the Committee of the party abolished and ruled alone. But Parnell delegated a good deal of work to others, keeping out of sight himself. Dillon was more reluctant to part with any power except to a favoured few who were his special friends. He controlled the National funds, he very largely controlled the *Freeman's Journal*, he attended conventions, he made speeches week after week, almost day after day, and after his election to the chair he spoke of opposition to himself with great severity. This was not the best way to attract adherents or win over opponents. Many suggested that a National Convention should be called, whose voice, speaking in the name of Ireland, should be heard and its mandate obeyed, and that thus would union come. But Mr. Dillon was averse, and one of his chief supporters, Mr. T. P. O'Connor, declared that such a gathering would be nothing better than a Donnybrook Fair. Gradually, however, Mr. Dillon's objections to a Convention disappeared; but instead of a National Convention of Irishmen at home, he would have a Convention of the Irish race. The Irish abroad, as well as those at home, had liberally subscribed to National funds, and Mr. Dillon naturally thought that all had a right to be called in and to say what was best for Ireland's future.<sup>1</sup>

This Convention met in Dublin on the 1st of September 1896. It was a large gathering, mustering in all 2500 delegates. They came over many seas and from many lands—from the teeming cities of Great Britain; from New York and Philadelphia and Boston and distant Montana; from the populous centres of Canada; from Nova Scotia and Newfound-

<sup>1</sup> Healy, pp. 162-3.

land ; from the great self-governing British Colonies washed by the waters of Southern seas ; from Cape Colony and Griqualand West ; from Kimberley, the diamond city of the English ; and from Johannesburg, the golden city of the Boers. Priests, professional men, merchants, journalists, seasoned politicians, they differed in many things, but all agreed in their love for Ireland and lifted up their voices in the cause of unity and peace at home. They were not able to understand so well as the home delegates the disputes and wrangles between Irish politicians, and it was in every sense regrettable that no effort was made to have these home delegates fully representative of Nationalist Ireland. In 1200 Irish parishes there were but 490 branches of the National Federation,<sup>1</sup> and many of these branches were moribund in 1896. One of Mr. Dillon's strongest supporters, Mr. M'Hugh, M.P., called public attention to the fact that such an organization could not of itself represent Nationalist Ireland or effect a reunion of Nationalist forces. "If the Convention was so constituted that only one party out of two, or two parties out of three, were prepared to accept its decisions, then its proceedings could not secure the re-establishment of unity." And he suggested that other bodies outside the Federation should be represented. But Mr. Dillon disagreed with him, and when the Convention opened its doors neither the followers of Mr. Redmond nor those of Mr. Healy were present.<sup>2</sup>

During the three days its sittings lasted, Dr. O'Donnell, Bishop of Raphoe, presided, and in opening the proceedings he spoke eloquently, as he always does. Able speeches were also made by Mr. Dillon, Mr. Blake, Mr. O'Brien and Mr. T. P. O'Connor, and by many of the delegates, home and foreign. But while much was said on questions of National policy, on agrarian, industrial and educational reform, and on Home Rule, there was no serious attempt made to bridge over the chasm which yawned between contending Nationalists. Father Flynn, a Waterford priest, proposed to appoint a committee of arbitration of the home and foreign delegates to draw up a set

<sup>1</sup> Healy, p. 136.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 143-4.



of rules forming a common platform upon which all Irish Nationalists might stand united. And Father Phillips, an American priest, reminding his audience that men have opinions and that these opinions are sometimes honestly expressed, deprecated harsh measures and was quite sure that more flies were caught by molasses than by vinegar.

But the voices raised for concord and peace were feeble and faint, and were drowned in the shriller notes of defiance and war. Mr. T. P. O'Connor poured ridicule on Father Flynn's suggestions. Father Phillip's views were treated with scant courtesy. Mr. O'Brien taunted Mr. Healy and his friends with having failed to face the music, and therefore having allowed judgment to go by default. Mr. Blake would have nothing to do with interference from outside in the management of the party funds. Mr. Dillon would allow no man in the party to flout his authority, and if any man did, no matter how great his abilities might be—this was evidently meant for Mr. Healy—he would ask him to withdraw from the party altogether. And a resolution was passed calling upon the Irish Party to take such steps as they found necessary for the establishment of unity and discipline in their own ranks.<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Dillon interpreted this resolution as a mandate to crush all opponents. During the following winter he made many speeches throughout Ireland and Great Britain, all in the same strain. He claimed to be a patient man, a long-suffering man, a man who kept his temper no matter how much he was provoked, a man who worked by conciliation and kindness for unity and peace. But in the midst of these peaceful protestations he sternly insisted on discipline being enforced. He spoke as the duly-elected Chairman of the Irish Party rather than as an individual; he spoke as the representative of the party, its head, its accredited champion, clothed with its full authority, and therefore entitled to respect and obedience from every member of the party, even from those who differed from him and disliked him. These gentlemen must leave

<sup>1</sup> Davitt's *Fall of Feudalism*, pp. 677-81; Healy, pp. 164-70; *Freeman's Journal*.

the party—he had no objection if they set up a party for themselves, he preferred to see them do so to being disloyal. Against Mr. Healy he was specially bitter, and more than once he held meetings to denounce him in Mr. Healy's constituency of North Louth. Neither from Mr. Healy nor from any other member must criticism be directed towards the party. "We in the Irish Party," he said, "can't stand criticism." Mr. O'Brien went quite as far as Mr. Dillon, and, like him, was specially enraged against Mr. Healy. So much was this the case that when Mr. O'Brien begged the Archbishop of Dublin to arbitrate between contending Nationalists, he excluded Mr. Healy. The country would deal with him, which meant that he must be driven from public life. When the party met in the beginning of 1897, new and stringent rules were adopted, making it penal for any member of the party to oppose Mr. Dillon in the House of Commons, and imposing new and onerous conditions on those who wanted sustenance from the party funds.

Yet these measures of coercion did not establish unity or promote peace. Mr. Knox, one of the most brilliant of the younger members of the party, defined this resolution as imposing a new constitution on the party, and, being formally expelled, had his action approved by his constituents at Derry. Mr. Healy equally flouted the resolutions passed as *ultra vires*, and declared that the powers conferred on the Chairman were such as had never been given to a chairman before, and that "the invention or enforcement of additional obligations is subversive of the constitution of the party, and an invasion of public and individual rights." Nearly twenty of the members refused to accept the conditions imposed on them as a qualification for payment from the party funds, and for these a sum of money was obtained by public subscription. The priests kept off Mr. Dillon's platforms. The Archbishop of Cashel replied to an invitation to attend one of these meetings by simply saying that he was in favour of every National movement. The Archbishop of Dublin met Mr. O'Brien's appeal to arbitrate between Parnellites and Dillonites by a



refusal. He thought a union which would leave out Mr. Healy "would stand, to say the least of it, in a position of somewhat unstable equilibrium." Cardinal Logue objected to the meetings held in Louth and Armagh to denounce Mr. Healy; "he did not want his Archdiocese turned into a bear-garden by contending factions." Mr. Dillon's opponents, pointing to his speeches, asked were they not right in calling him a boss, and had not their prediction of his Chairmanship been fulfilled? Even Mr. Dillon's friends were not quite easy in their minds. In 1892 he had ridiculed the notion that there could be absolute unanimity in the Irish Party. To entertain such a notion would be to assume that the party was a party without brains.<sup>1</sup> This speech was certainly more worthy of a constitutional leader and of Mr. Dillon than his speeches in 1896 and 1897. In no constitutional party can cast-iron unity be obtained, and any party which claims to be above criticism is almost certainly below it. Nor could any one shut his eyes to the fact that in 1897 and 1898 the party was utterly disorganized and utterly worthless as a weapon of reform.<sup>2</sup>

In these circumstances Ireland had little to expect from the Imperial Parliament, and yet such is the wayward course of destiny that it was during this period of strife and confusion that some great remedial measures were obtained. In 1896 Mr. Gerald Balfour, the Chief Secretary, introduced the Land Bill which he had promised in the previous year. In spite of the obvious purpose of the Act of 1881, as expressed in the Healy clause, tenants were still rented on their improvements. Many classes of tenants were altogether excluded from the benefits of that Act, and the Act of 1891, with its clogging limitations and conditions, had not much stimulated land purchase. The Bill of 1896 was intended to remedy these defects, to admit to the benefits of the Act of 1881 tenants hitherto excluded, to protect tenants' improvements and to stimulate land purchase.<sup>3</sup> The Bill also was intended to give

<sup>1</sup> Healy, p. 74.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 171-82; MacCarthy, *The Story of an Irishman*, pp. 374-6.

<sup>3</sup> Hansard, 4th series, vol. xli. p. 630 (Mr. Morley's Speech).

relief to tenants who had already purchased. It extended the period of payment from forty-nine to seventy years, providing that at the end of each decade there should be a reduction of the yearly instalment, regard being had to the fact that at each such period the principal due was less, and instalments due in lieu of principal and interest should be therefore lessened. Decadal reductions of nearly 20 per cent were thus obtained.

Mr. Dillon's attitude towards the Bill was not friendly. Always distrustful of Irish landlords, he said that the Bill fell far short of what the times demanded. It was, besides, complicated and intricate, and would afford a profitable field for litigation. He therefore denounced it as "a rotten sham and fraudulent Bill," and he assailed Mr. Redmond because the latter welcomed the Bill instead of attacking it. Nor did it dispose him to be friendly when he saw that Mr. Healy shared Mr. Redmond's view. Still he would endeavour to amend it, and had a Committee of the party appointed to draw up amendments. On this Committee Mr. Healy's name was placed. He had, however, not been consulted beforehand, and had no intention of serving. He had, he said, been recently expelled from the Committee of the party, and he was at a loss to know why this unsolicited honour should now be paid him. "I am happy to think that a Committee otherwise composed of so many able men does not require my assistance, and my recollection of the subject from former years remains sufficiently distinct to enable me to hope that I shall not require theirs."<sup>1</sup> As a matter of fact the amendments of the Party Committee were not fortunate enough to be accepted in Committee. Mr. Healy and his brother were more successful, and owing to them and to Mr. Redmond, the Bill was considerably amended and improved. As usual, the House of Lords, being a House of landlords, struck out some of these amendments. When the Lords' amendments were agreed to in the Commons, Mr. Dillon protested, declaring that in its final shape the Bill was worse than when first introduced. Mr. Davitt went further, and opposed it at every stage, as an amalgam of fraud and hypocrisy.

<sup>1</sup> Healy, p. 154, 22nd April.



But the Government was not in a yielding mood. When Mr. Balfour was introducing the Bill, he plainly intimated that if it were opposed by the representatives of the Irish tenants it would be instantly dropped. At a later stage Mr. Chamberlain made it clear that the Bill was meant to be non-contentious, and if Mr. Dillon's description of it was endorsed by all his friends it would be abandoned. Compelled then to accept or reject, Mr. Dillon accepted and the Bill passed, though Mr. Dillon was plainly right that it could not be regarded as a final settlement.<sup>1</sup>

In the following year the unusual spectacle was seen of Orangemen and Nationalists, Parnellites and Anti-Parnellites combining on an Irish question. In 1894 a Royal Commission had been appointed to inquire into the financial relations between Great Britain and Ireland and their relative taxable capacity.<sup>2</sup> Presided over by Mr. Childers, lately Chancellor of the Exchequer, and including among its members such able financiers as Mr. Sexton and the O'Connor Don, many witnesses were examined, mostly high officials whose position and experience enabled them to speak with authority on financial matters.<sup>3</sup> Briefly, the tale that these officers had to tell was that Ireland was being robbed by Great Britain, that the fiscal clauses of the Act of Union were grossly unjust, and that the injustice then perpetrated had continued and increased. Under an Irish Parliament, bad and corrupt as it had been, taxation was light and the National Debt small.<sup>4</sup>

Since the Union all that had been changed. The cost of suppressing the rebellion of 1798 and of passing the Union was placed on Ireland; its taxation and debt was therefore increased and continued to increase, until in 1817 it ceased to have its separate Chancellor of the Exchequer, its separate National Debt, and its separate Annual Budget.<sup>5</sup> Fiscal unity, however, was not even then established between the two countries. Regard was had to England's growing wealth and to Ireland's

<sup>1</sup> Hansard, 4th series, vols. xli. xliii. xliv.

<sup>2</sup> Lough, *England's Wealth, Ireland's Poverty*, pp. 9-10.

<sup>3</sup> Lough, p. 5.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* 203.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* 14.

increasing poverty. When Sir Robert Peel imposed the income tax he had not extended it to Ireland.<sup>1</sup> In 1853, however, Mr. Gladstone had extended it, and leaving out some smaller items of taxation, fiscal unity became an accomplished fact. Since then successive Chancellors have been careful to study the special needs of Great Britain and have ignored the special needs of Ireland.<sup>2</sup> A high tax, for instance, has been imposed on spirits, which is an Irish industry; a light tax on beer, which is more usually drunk across the Channel.<sup>3</sup> Tea and tobacco,<sup>4</sup> much used in Ireland, had also been heavily taxed; and while the wealth of Ireland had decreased and her population had been reduced by millions, a police force had been maintained out of all proportion to the population, and a civil service the most expensive in Europe.<sup>5</sup>

With the knowledge of all these things the Royal Commission found:

1. That for the purposes of this inquiry Great Britain and Ireland should be considered as separate entities.
2. That the Act of Union imposed on Ireland a burden she was unable to bear.
3. That the increased taxation put upon Ireland between 1853 and 1860 was not justified.
4. That identity of rates of taxation does not necessarily involve equality of burden.
5. That though the actual revenue of Ireland compared to that of Great Britain was one eleventh, its taxable capacity was no more than a twentieth,<sup>6</sup> and as a consequence that Ireland was being overtaxed to the amount of more than £3,000,000 a year.

Here was common ground for all Irishmen, and with the view of taking joint action in Parliament a conference of all Irish representatives was summoned. The issuing circular was signed by Messrs. Healy and Redmond, by Mr. Horace Plunkett, the Unionist M.P. for South Dublin, and by Colonel

<sup>1</sup> Lough, p. 45.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* 85.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 72.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 50-51.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* 43-44.

<sup>6</sup> Davitt, p. 690; Lough.



Saunderson, the Orange leader. Mr. Dillon at first held aloof, but he subsequently attended the conference, though he refused to support the resolution which it was proposed to move in the House of Commons. This was: "That the findings of the Royal Commission on the financial relations between Great Britain and Ireland disclose a disproportion between the taxation of Ireland and its taxable capacity as compared with the other parts of the kingdom, which is inconsistent with the spirit of the Act of Union and demands the immediate attention of Parliament." Mr. Dillon's alternative resolution was moved in the House of Commons by Mr. Blake. It was, however, opposed by all the Unionists, and was defeated by an overwhelming majority.<sup>1</sup> Several public meetings were subsequently held in Ireland, but they came to nothing, and the unjust taxation of Ireland continued.

But if the Government, strong in its majority, could set Irish agitation and Irish unity at defiance, and so make no serious attempt to readjust the fiscal burdens of Ireland and Great Britain, they could at least do something in relief of local taxation. Mr. Knox, M.P. for Derry, in 1896, moved that such relief should be given by extending the Agricultural Rating Act to Ireland, and thus relieve local rates as had been already done in England and Scotland. His motion was defeated, but it was renewed next year, on which occasion it was supported by the Irish Unionists. Again he was defeated. But a state of things which placed the Irish farmer at such a disadvantage compared with his British brother, and this in the face of the recent Report of the Financial Relations Commission, was too much even for Unionist newspapers, and the unyielding attitude of the Government was condemned. Inspired, it was said, by Mr. Chamberlain, Ministers retraced their steps. It was agreed to give £750,000 a year in relief of local rates; and this grant was accompanied by a Local Government Bill which passed into law in the session of 1898. This measure effected a revolutionary change in the system of county and district government. Hitherto non-representative

<sup>1</sup> *Annual Register*, 1897, p. 105.

bodies called Grand Juries managed county affairs—the repairs of roads and bridges, of county hospitals, asylums, court-houses and industrial schools. They had the appointment of all county officers, the duty of providing guarantees for tramways or railways when such required guarantees, and they had the power to levy and collect taxes for all these purposes. As Justices of the Peace they sat as *ex officio*s at the Boards of Guardians, and in this way often exercised a controlling influence in the administration of poor relief. They had besides the duty of considering all criminal cases as a preliminary to having such cases tried at the County Assizes. Appointed by the High Sheriff, almost invariably a landlord, they were themselves landlords, with all the prejudices of the landlord class; and whenever landlord privileges were assailed by agitation or violence, they were prodigal of resolutions demanding coercion laws. Under the Local Government Act they were still allowed to meet at Assizes and consider criminal cases. But their fiscal and administrative powers were transferred to popularly elected bodies. For the county the new body was the County Council, for the Unions the new body was the District Council. The franchise was to be the same as the Parliamentary franchise, and for membership every one of full age and of mental capacity, even women, was eligible. The only persons excepted were clergymen, the exclusion being due to the Parnellites, this, no doubt, in revenge for the opposition they had encountered at elections from the priests.<sup>1</sup>

To induce the representatives of the Irish landlords to acquiesce in the loss of their enormous powers, half the sum of £750,000 voted for relief of local taxation was to be given to the landlords. They had hitherto paid half the poor rates, and by this grant were entirely relieved. The other half of the sum named went in relief of county cess, and was so far a boon to tenants who had hitherto been compelled to pay the whole of the county cess. The Bill met with a favourable reception from all sides. Mr. Healy and Mr. Redmond praised it, Mr.

<sup>1</sup> *A Guide to Irish Local Government*, by Muldoon and M'Sweeney. Dublin, 1898.



Dillon acknowledged that it would effect a far-reaching revolution in the conditions of Irish local government and Irish local life. The Irish Unionists acquiesced because they were relieved from the payment of poor rates. They swallowed the disagreeable dose when mixed with such a soothing draught.<sup>1</sup> In such circumstances the Bill passed with little opposition, and for the first time power passed from non-representative and often corrupt bodies into the hands of the people.

In the next year was passed an "Act for establishing a Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction in Ireland and for other purposes connected therewith." This concession was chiefly due to Mr. Horace Plunkett, M.P. He was a Protestant without a trace of bigotry; an admirer of Ulster energy and enterprise, but abhorring Orange intolerance; a landlord, but an indulgent one; a Unionist who gave credit to Home Rulers for good intentions; loyal to England, but condemning her oppression of Ireland in the past. Familiar with agricultural conditions on both sides of the Atlantic, he saw that Ireland—a purely agricultural country—was hopelessly outclassed in competition with other nations. Without looking to Government for aid, he thought that Irishmen might do much to help themselves. Outside the noisy arena of political combat, and laying aside for the moment their political and religious prejudices, he could not see why Irish farmers could not come together in association and combination. They could talk over their difficulties; they could combine to obtain better and cheaper manures and machinery and more favourable transport facilities; they could look for more suitable markets for their agricultural produce. But a landlord and a Unionist talking to National farmers was a voice crying in the wilderness, and it was not until 1894 that the Irish Agricultural Organization Society (I.A.O.S.) was established. Its progress was rapid, and by the end of 1898 there were branches in every county in Ireland. Some of these were agricultural societies, a greater number were dairy societies,

<sup>1</sup> *Annual Register*, p. 69.

others were poultry or home industries societies, and in not a few cases there were agricultural banks.<sup>1</sup> At the central branch Catholic priests and Unionist peers, landlords and farmers worked cordially, and in the country districts Catholic and Protestant clergymen were frequently present at the same meetings.

At the close of 1895 Mr. Plunkett thought the time had come to appeal to the Government. For the time Home Rule had ceased to be a living issue; but Mr. Plunkett believed there would be no difficulty in obtaining from Government the establishment of an Agricultural Board such as already existed in England, if only the Irish members would put forth a united and definite demand. With this object he invited all the Irish members and a few other prominent men to a conference at the close of the session of 1895. It was hence called the Recess Committee. The Anti-Parnellites held aloof, Mr. MacCarthy declaring that the object of Mr. Plunkett was to wean the people from Home Rule. Mr. Redmond, however, and his party joined in, as did many Unionists. Mr. T. P. Gill, once a Parnellite M.P., and an exceedingly able man, acted as secretary, and to obtain information he travelled through France and Denmark. Other valuable reports came from Wurtemberg, Belgium and Bavaria. Finally, Mr. Plunkett presented the Report of the Recess Committee in the autumn of 1896. He was careful to point out that he and his colleagues relied on individual and combined effort rather than on State aid. "In asking," he said, "for the latter we have throughout attached the utmost importance to its being granted in such a manner as to evoke and supplement the former; and if at the outset we appear to give undue prominence to the capabilities of State initiation, it must be remembered that we are dealing with economic conditions which have been artificially produced, and may therefore require exceptional treatment of a temporary nature to bring about a permanent remedy."<sup>2</sup> Mr. Balfour's reply was sympathetic, but nothing

<sup>1</sup> *Annual Register*, p. 209.

<sup>2</sup> *Report of the Recess Committee*, edited by T. P. Gill.



was done till 1899, when the Act setting up an Agricultural Board, with a revenue of nearly £170,000 a year, became law.

These concessions were the more remarkable when the weakness of the Opposition is considered. Lord Rosebery had proved an unfortunate selection as leader of the Liberals—a man without any deep conviction or any fixity of purpose. Finding himself unable to excite enthusiasm or command sufficient support, and that he appeared to divide the energies and try the faith of Liberals, he resigned the leadership in October 1896.<sup>1</sup> Without any formal recognition, Sir William Harcourt became leader; but he also had to complain that he was not given the undivided support of the party. In fact, Lord Rosebery's friends distrusted him and held aloof from him, and would have evidently preferred to follow some one else, now that Lord Rosebery was gone. In these circumstances Sir William Harcourt wished to abandon a position which he could not creditably fill. "I cannot," he said, "and I shall not consent to be a candidate for any contested position." He considered that a party rent by sectional disputes and personal interests could do nothing, and that a disputed leadership beset by distracted sections and complicating interests is an impossible situation.<sup>2</sup> Thus in the last days of 1898 the Liberal Party was again without a leader.

Meantime the old warrior who had so often led the Liberal hosts to victory had disappeared from the scene. Hating oppression to the last, he was enraged at the awful massacres of the Armenians by the Turks, and flinging aside the burden of years, he came forth from his books to arraign the Turks before mankind. His regret was that he was no longer able to assail them as he had formerly when they had been guilty of the Bulgarian atrocities. His last speech was at Liverpool in the end of 1896, a really marvellous performance for one on the threshold of his eighty-seventh year. During the next twelve months his vital energies grew weaker and weaker, and in May 1898 the end came. When it was announced, messages of condolence came from every part of the civilized

<sup>1</sup> *Annual Register*, p. 190.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 191-3.

world. A grave in Westminster Abbey was in due course provided to receive the remains of the illustrious dead, and in Parliament eloquent tributes were paid by the party leaders to the memory of one who had shed lustre upon the English name, and even upon the human race.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Dillon, on the part of the Irish members, spoke with feeling and with eloquence, and from every part of Ireland there was a responsive echo to his words. For the great statesman was loved and honoured in the cabins of the Irish poor. More than any other Englishman, living or dead, he had laboured on their behalf. He had freed them from the oppressions of an alien Church and from the grinding tyranny of a hated land system, and he had endeavoured to bring back to them their lost Parliament; and when they remembered these things they poured benedictions upon his name.<sup>2</sup>

At that date the Irish Party had fallen low in public esteem. Its unity and usefulness were gone. Individual members by their ability might make an impression in the House of Commons, but the party as such was absolutely powerless. In Ireland the public refused to subscribe to its maintenance, and little assistance came from across the Atlantic. Mr. Dillon did his best, but too much time was spent in denunciation of Mr. Healy, on whom the blame for everything was thrown. There was no real attempt, however, to meet the objections which Mr. Healy made. At last, Mr. Dillon realized that under his leadership unity was impossible, and in 1898 he suggested a conference of Parnellites and Anti-Parnellites. He even resigned the chair, professing his willingness to serve under a Parnellite chairman, a noble act of self-effacement and patriotism. But no Parnellite attended the conference except Mr. O'Kelly, though Mr. Harrington had already been working to bring about Union. Mr. Healy also was not averse, so long as Mr. Dillon was not in the chair. And Mr. O'Brien started the United League in 1898, an organization which was meant to take the place both of the National Federation and of what remained of the National

<sup>1</sup> Morley, ii. 760-73.

<sup>2</sup> *Review of Reviews*, June 1898.



League. Spreading into other counties, the new organization spoke out for harmony among the leaders, and threatened with extinction those who still clung to the course of faction. These concurring causes were fruitful of good, and in 1900, after ten years of wasting war, all parties came together: Mr. Dillon ceased to be Chairman, and Mr. Redmond, the Parnellite leader, took his place, and unity became an accomplished fact.

## CHAPTER XIX

### *The New Century*

WHEN the old century went out the British Empire was at war with the two Boer republics of South Africa, the Orange River Free State and the Transvaal. Partly Dutch, partly German, partly French Huguenots, these Boers had settled in Cape Colony in the seventeenth century, and in 1815 came for the first time under British rule. Being slave-owners, and resenting bitterly the emancipation of their slaves in 1834, thousands of them (1834-7) trekked from Cape Colony northwards, settling in the territory which extends from the Orange River to the Limpopo, and finally forming two independent republics. They were a fighting race, fighting with the natives whom they dispossessed, fighting with the Zulus, fighting with the British, fighting among themselves. In 1877 the Transvaal was annexed by England; in 1880 the Boers rose in rebellion and defeated the British at Majuba Hill. The following year Mr. Gladstone gave back the Transvaal its independence, subject only to a shadowy British suzerainty, which became still more shadowy after the London Convention of 1884. The discovery of the Rand gold-fields brought thousands of miners, mostly British, to the Transvaal, and then fresh troubles began. The new owners—the Uitlanders, as they were called—had brought energy and capital, and soon made the Transvaal rich. But they could get no political rights, no votes, no share in the government; and at every turn they were hampered and harassed by corrupt officials, by insolent policemen, by excessive taxes, by Government concessions and monopolies. But the autocratic Transvaal chief, President Kruger, was unyielding. He dis-



liked the British. He had formerly trekked from Cape Colony, and now he was again hemmed in by those from whom he had fled. Eastward was the small Portuguese territory of Lorenzo Marques, but south and south-east were the British Colonies of the Cape and Natal, while west was the British possession of Bechuanaland, and north the British flag had just been hoisted in the land of the Matabele. Kruger angrily declared he and his burghers were shut up in a kraal. The British authorities took sides with the Uitlanders, and as negotiations failed, war broke out in the end of 1899.

Large numbers of Irish Nationalists both inside and outside Parliament sympathized with the Boers. The sight of a small nation of farmers entering into a struggle with the mighty British Empire was one which appealed to the imagination. Every lover of freedom found it hard to repress his admiration at the gallant stand which these farmers made; nor was there scarce a parallel in history for the valour with which they encountered veteran troops, the skill with which they outmanœuvred experienced generals, and the victories which they gained even when vastly outnumbered by their foes. But with all their fine qualities these Boers were narrow-minded and illiberal, excessively cruel to their coloured servants, fanatically attached to their own creed, and fanatically intolerant of other creeds. As for Catholics, they regarded them as did the Scotch Covenanters of the seventeenth century, and had they taken possession of Cape Town the Catholics there dreaded the utter ruin of their Church. And yet the Boer leaders were regarded as heroes in Ireland, and the news of every Boer victory hailed with enthusiasm. Deeply humiliated because of the disasters which had overtaken their arms, the English bitterly resented the conduct of the Irish. The Unionists pointed to these manifestations of hatred towards England, and used them as an argument against Home Rule; and at the General Election in October 1900 the Liberals were taunted with being the allies of traitors who cheered England's enemies and longed for the dismemberment of the British Empire. Nor can there be any doubt that voters

were thus influenced and votes lost to the friends of Home Rule.

On their side the Liberals retorted that the Unionists, though many years in office, had done nothing to redeem the promises they had formerly made at the polls. They had done nothing to give better houses to the working classes in towns, and nothing to lighten the burden of poverty and old age by giving pensions to the aged poor. The Liberals also complained that the Unionists had dissolved on a worn-out register. But these accusations were made in vain. The Unionists had selected their time well, when the disasters of the early part of the war were forgotten in the news of Lord Roberts' recent victories. In the autumn of 1900 it was believed in England—erroneously, as it proved—that the war was over; and the fact that the Boers had been beaten, that Majuba had been avenged, and that in consequence the richest gold-fields in the world would soon be a British possession, was highly agreeable to British pride as well as to British greed. The Unionists were therefore returned with an enormous majority. Their total strength was 402; their opponents being but 268, of these 186 being Liberals and 82 Nationalists. This meant no change in Ireland. South Dublin and a division of Dublin City had been wrested from the Unionists, but the latter had won Derry City and Galway.<sup>1</sup>

With Parnellites and Anti-Parnellites acting together the Nationalists ought to have done better. The explanation is that the spirit of faction still survived. Mr. William O'Brien was then the most potent man among the popular leaders. His organization, the United Irish League, by advocating compulsory purchase, had readily obtained recruits among the farmers, and had already extended so much that it became the dominant factor at elections, and it had powerfully, even decisively, operated in bringing Parnellites and Anti-Parnellites together. But while Mr. O'Brien welcomed the adhesion of Mr. Redmond, he wanted no co-operation with Mr. Healy. At League meetings Mr. Healy's friends were spoken of as public

<sup>1</sup> *Annual Register*, pp. 194-211.



enemies, and when Mr. Healy refused to attend the National Convention in June, he was fiercely assailed. His friends were hunted down at the General Election, and driven from the seats they had filled, and Mr. Healy himself was also attacked in North Louth by Mr. O'Brien in person. His constituents, however, were resolved not to part with their brilliant member, and Mr. Healy was returned. But when the General Election was over, a National Convention was again summoned and met in December, and one of its first acts was to attack Mr. Healy. His expulsion from the party was proposed by Mr. O'Brien himself in a speech of great eloquence and great bitterness. The motion was supported by Mr. Dillon, and though opposed strongly, even vehemently, by Mr. Harrington, it was carried. Mr. Redmond, who filled the chair, disapproved of what was being done, wishing for a real union among all Irish Nationalists, but he bowed to the declared will of the Convention, and Mr. Healy was driven from the party.<sup>1</sup>

In April 1900 the Queen paid a visit to Ireland. It was said she wanted, in doing so, to mark her appreciation of the conduct of the Irish soldiers in the war, who in every battle in which they were engaged had shown the traditional valour of their race. In January of the next year the Queen died. During her reign, in its length unprecedented in British history, the Empire had advanced enormously in trade and commerce, in extent of possessions, in population and in wealth. The standard of comfort among the masses had become higher, popular liberties had been so extended that the people had become the masters in the land, and though other nations had grown great and other empires risen, England was still the unquestioned mistress of the sea. The people respected their Sovereign because of the pride she took in her world-wide Empire, because of her devotion to her public duties, because of her tact and good sense, and her respect for constitutional forms. They respected her because of the order and decorum maintained at her Court, because of the purity of her domestic life. And though she died with the burden of more than

<sup>1</sup> *Freeman's Journal*.

eighty years upon her, at an age long past the usually allotted span, the grief of the nation was profound. The pomp of the funeral procession and of the funeral service, and the tributes in Parliament, were clothed with a certain air of formality, because they were usual and prescribed. But there was grief which no State formality called forth, from the cities and towns and villages, from the people of Canada and Australia and India, from the Maoris of New Zealand and from the islands in the Southern seas.<sup>1</sup> Ireland alone stood sullenly apart. As she had in the Jubilee year of 1887 no share in the nation's joy, she had now no share in the nation's sorrow. For it was remembered that the dead Queen cared little for Ireland and had no sympathy with Irish popular demands. She regretted the Disestablishment of the Irish Church, she disliked the various Land Acts, she abhorred Home Rule; and while she was the friend of Disraeli whom Ireland detested, she disliked Gladstone whom Ireland loved.

This refusal to weep when England wept, this continued sympathy with Boer victories and continued rejoicing at British defeats, did not help Ireland in Parliament, and in 1900 there was no mention of Ireland in the Queen's Speech. Nor was there in the Royal Speech of the following year, except some vague promise that a measure might be introduced "for regulating sale by landlords to occupying tenants in Ireland."<sup>2</sup> Mr. Redmond, however, wanted compulsory purchase, and moved an amendment to the Address asking for such. He was supported by Mr. T. W. Russell and by many of the Liberals, with the result, which was not unhopeful, that 140 voted with him against 235 on the side of the Government.<sup>3</sup> Mr. William O'Brien was not so well supported on his motion censuring the harsh enforcement of the Coercion Act.<sup>4</sup> Nor did this motion check the Irish Executive in its attacks on the United Irish League. Public speeches were carefully noted, public meetings watched by the police and sometimes broken up, and in the years 1901 and 1902 forty-two prominent

<sup>1</sup> *Annual Register*, pp. 8-20; *Times*, Jan. 23.

<sup>2</sup> *Annual Register*, p. 24.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* for 1902, pp. 36-37.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* 38-39.



persons were sent to prison for political offences. Eleven of these were members of Parliament, two were ex-members, several others were newspaper editors, and one was a lady—the owner of the *Waterford Star*.<sup>1</sup> In 1902 the King's Speech was silent about Ireland, and again Mr. Redmond moved an amendment advocating compulsory purchase, and condemning the enforcement of Coercion. The Government indeed admitted that there was no serious crime in Ireland, but there were conspiracies against the payment of rent and there was boycotting, and to meet such cases the weapons of Coercion had been used. As to compulsory sale, the Chief Secretary would have none of it; but he was willing to promote measures for the encouragement of agriculture, industry, and education, in the honest belief that such work was good and was worth doing.<sup>2</sup> In the division Mr. Redmond was, of course, defeated; but it was satisfactory for him to note that he had the support of Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman and Mr. Morley and of 70 Liberals. Better results than this could not be expected as long as the Irish Nationalists continued to shout for the Boer leaders at public meetings, and to cheer Boer victories even in the House of Commons. These cheers did the Boers no good and received from them no recognition, nor did they do England any harm. But they outraged English opinion and irritated those whom the Irish members, if they wanted anything for their country, were bound to persuade. Mr. Dillon rebuked such tactless outbursts of impotent disaffection. But harm was done nevertheless.<sup>3</sup> Lord Rosebery was angry and vowed he would not consent to have a Parliament at Dublin. Mr. Asquith was not so emphatic, but his views were substantially the same. Even so staunch and tried a friend of Ireland as Mr. Morley, while still faithful to Home Rule, deplored "the bad feeling and want of decency" of these Irish members who laughed and jeered at the capture and humiliation of a British General.<sup>4</sup> One noted enemy of Ireland disappeared from the scene during the year in the person of Lord Salisbury, who

<sup>1</sup> Davitt's *Fall of Feudalism*, pp. 700-701.

<sup>2</sup> *Annual Register*, pp. 27-30.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* for 1902, p. 86.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* 91-92.

resigned the Premiership and was succeeded by Mr. Arthur Balfour. And the Irish Secretary brought in a Land Purchase Bill, which was not, however, persevered with, though it met with a favourable reception from the Irish members.<sup>1</sup> Beyond this Ireland's interest in the Parliamentary history of the year was little, and 1902 like 1901 might be regarded as a barren year.

At that date the outlook was not bright. The Land Courts were blocked, and thousands, unable to get their cases taken up, were compelled to pay rents which were too high. In spite of the Land Purchase Acts of 1891 and 1896, land purchase was proceeding slowly. And meantime the strongest, the healthiest, the most enterprising among the young Irish peasants were flying from Ireland, leaving the weaker behind. The poorhouses were well filled, and in every county, even with a diminishing population, the asylums were being enlarged. There was discontent and disaffection all over the land. The farmer was unable to get his rent fixed, and even when he did he had but a lease of fifteen years, at the end of which the rent was to be again fixed. And in order to get a still greater reduction than formerly he let his land become deteriorated as he approached the end of the judicial term. The tenant who had not bought his holding, because he and his landlord could not agree as to the price, was envious of his neighbour who had already become a peasant proprietor, and who, with a great reduction in his yearly payments, was becoming the owner of his holding. Yet the extreme men belonging to the different parties in Ireland had nothing to propose but to continue their quarrels. The landlords, unable either to learn or forget, still wept over their vanished power, and clinging tenaciously to what was left to them, refused to sell their properties except at a prohibitive price; and at the least sign of agitation among their tenants they raised the old cry for Coercion. The tenants' representatives, grudging the landlords anything but the price of their tickets to England, wished that agitation should continue. As for the Orangemen, even the farmers, they were reluctant

<sup>1</sup> *Annual Register*, pp. 102-3.



to join hands with their Catholic fellow-tenants, and readily listened to interested orators who talked of the Boyne and Aughrim and of William of Orange.

But there were moderate men as well as extreme men. There were landlords like Lord Dunraven who disliked Home Rule, but disliked Dublin Castle just as much, and who, believing that land purchase was the only solution of Irish Land questions, wished that it should go on more rapidly. There were tenants' representatives who did not wish for the ruin of the landlords, but wanted them to remain in Ireland, having disposed of their properties. And there were Orangemen who thronged to hear Mr. T. W. Russell and cheered him when he advocated compulsory sale.

Noting all these things, a young Galway landlord, Captain Shawe Taylor, in the end of 1902 addressed a letter to representative men of the different parties, inviting them to a conference on the Land question—the hope being that by mutual concession and compromise a solution might be found. By many of the landlords the invitation was coldly received, while Mr. Redmond described it as a “white flag” hung out by the landlords. But the moderates on both sides asserted themselves. Their hands were strengthened by a statement of the Chief Secretary that it was impossible for any Government to settle the Irish Land question; it must be settled by the parties interested, and then the Government would as far as possible give effect to the settlement arrived at. Any such settlement necessarily involved holding a conference. It was held in the end of December 1902, under the chairmanship of Lord Dunraven. The other landlord representatives were Lord Mayo, Colonel Poe, and Colonel Everard. The tenants were represented by Messrs. Redmond, Harrington, William O'Brien, and T. W. Russell; Captain Shawe Taylor acted as Secretary.<sup>1</sup> Reason and compromise soon showed themselves in the deliberations which followed. Recognizing that the days of their ascendancy were over, the landlords agreed that dual ownership ought to be abolished, and that until it was there

<sup>1</sup> *Annual Register*, pp. 247-9.

would be no peace in Ireland. The tenants' representatives agreed that the landlords ought to get a price for their land which would leave them their net second term incomes. This could be done by lowering the rate of interest on the purchase money, and by spreading out the payments over a long term of years. This would postpone the day at which the tenant would be complete owner of his holding, and it would involve giving a higher price, but not necessarily a higher annual payment; and, after all, the immediate reduction with the prospect of ultimate ownership was all that the tenant sought.

It was agreed, further, at the conference that when the landlord insisted on a higher price than the tenant was willing to give, the State should step in and bridge over the difference between the contracting parties. With great advantage the State might thus vote even a large sum, for the settlement of the Land question would effect a considerable saving in public expenditure. The Land Commission Courts and the Land Judges Court cost between them annually a sum of more than £300,000.<sup>1</sup> In addition to this, an enormous police force was maintained chiefly for the purpose of keeping landlords and tenants from coming to blows; and it was notorious that the crime and outrage which sometimes stained the annals of the country had their origin in agrarian disputes. The recommendations of the Land Conference were agreed to unanimously, and were welcomed by the Government, and in the following February a Land Purchase Bill, partly based on these recommendations, was introduced.

At that date the Chief Secretary for Ireland was Mr. George Wyndham. He was an Englishman and a Tory pledged irrevocably against Home Rule, and as such in little favour with Irish Nationalists. Their aversion to him was all the greater because he had acted as Secretary to Mr. Arthur Balfour during the exciting times of the Plan of Campaign war, and especially because he was known to be in complete sympathy with the views of his chief as to the iniquity of the Plan and as to the necessity for putting down its advocates.

<sup>1</sup> Dunraven, *The Outlook in Ireland*, p. 62.



Worst of all, since he became Chief Secretary himself, Mr. Wyndham had put the Coercion Act in force and thrown many of the popular leaders into prison. Yet it was difficult to dislike him. Genial, warm-hearted, witty and kind, an author, a poet, an eloquent speaker, he is an aristocrat with democratic instincts, a man who, in spite of his birth and surroundings, feels for the people and is ready to do battle on their behalf. On the affections of Irishmen he has special claims, for he is the grandson of Pamela FitzGerald, and therefore great-grandson of Lord Edward, one of Ireland's best-beloved sons. And Mr. Wyndham is proud of his Irish blood, and has never concealed his partiality for Ireland, nor his desire to do something on her behalf.<sup>1</sup> He viewed the assembling of the Land Conference with the greatest sympathy, and was well pleased that its proceedings were so harmonious, and its conclusions arrived at with unanimity. Nor can there be any doubt that he wished to carry out its recommendations in their entirety, and would have done so had he been able to obtain the consent of his colleagues in the Cabinet.

His Bill contemplated the total abolition of Irish landlordism and the final settlement of the Irish Land question, and for this purpose a sum of £100,000,000 was to be advanced by the State to enable the tenants to buy. In addition there was to be a bonus of £12,000,000 given to the landlords who sold, this being an inducement to them to sell. If, therefore, the tenant agreed to buy his holding at £100, the landlord received £112, the extra amount being the bonus of 12 per cent. The Land Conference agreed that the landlord should get such a sum as, when invested at 3 per cent, would bring him his net income from second term rents, this being calculated at 90 per cent of the total. Mr. Wyndham undertook to provide him with this, the money to be advanced to the tenant to be repayable in sixty-eight years at  $3\frac{1}{4}$  per cent. The landlord was to be paid not in land stock, but in cash, the cash to be raised by a Government flotation of stock, and the loss on flotation, if any, to be made good out of the yearly agricultural grant.

<sup>1</sup> *Review of Reviews*, April 1903.

The Bill provided that, as a result of his bargain, judicial tenants were not to get on first term rents less than 20 per cent nor more than 40 per cent, and on second term rents not less than 10 per cent nor more than 30 per cent. This was called buying within the zones, and in such cases there was no need for inspection by the Estates Commission officials. Obviously the intention was to avoid delay in transferring the land from landlord to tenant, and this was done by the omission of inspection. And equally plain was the intention to raise the price in the landlord's favour by limiting the reduction given to the tenant, and by lowering the rate of interest from 4 per cent to  $3\frac{1}{4}$  per cent. The landlord was also saved the trouble and expense of proving title, for this was done by the Estates Commissioners created by the Bill when passed.

Never before had such a favourable reception been given to any measure dealing with the thorny subject of Irish land. The Irish leader, Mr. John Redmond, described it as "the greatest measure of land purchase reform ever seriously offered to the Irish people, and that it is intended to contain, and may quite easily be made to contain, all the elements of a settlement of the Irish agrarian difficulty and the ending of the Irish land war, the permanent unity of all classes in Ireland, and the laying broad and sure of the foundations of social peace."<sup>1</sup> Mr. T. W. Russell supported it because it represented the passing of Irish landlordism, "the beginning of the end of as tragic a story as the history of any civilized country presents."<sup>2</sup> Mr. Dillon saw that the Chief Secretary was desirous of signalizing his tenure of office "by solving the question which has proved too hard a nut to crack for many of his predecessors."<sup>3</sup> Mr. William O'Brien spoke in the same strain as did Mr. Redmond and Mr. Dillon. Mr. Healy regarded it as marking "a reversal of a long period of dismal oppression and awful woe, of a breach of treaty faith committed two centuries ago, but having to this day left a living effect. This Bill will change more than Ireland, it will change England too, and

<sup>1</sup> Hansard, cxxi. 1208.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 1266.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 1304.



with that change I hope to see a brighter light in the eyes of dark Rosaleen.”<sup>1</sup> The opposition leaders were not unfriendly, and when Mr. Wyndham summed up the second reading debate in a speech of singular eloquence, 443 voted with him, while only 26 went into the lobby against the Bill.<sup>2</sup>

In the minority were men who were reluctant to pledge British credit for such men as the Irish landlords, though the plea that Irish tenants might repudiate their bargains was not seriously put forth in face of the punctuality with which former tenant-purchasers had paid their instalments. On the other hand, the tenants' representatives objected to many things in the Bill, and in Committee Messrs. Redmond, Dillon, Healy, William O'Brien, and T. W. Russell fought hard to have it amended. They objected that it did nothing for the evicted tenants or for the labourers. They objected to the zones as meant to unduly inflate the price of Irish land. They objected to give the landlords a 3 per cent security instead of the uncertain security even of his second term rents. They objected to the abolition of the decadal reductions. They objected to have one-fourth of the tenants compelled to buy when three-fourths agreed to buy. They objected to the omission of inspection, the effect of which would be that neither the interests of the tenants nor the State were sufficiently safeguarded. They objected that non-judicial tenants should not have their rents first reduced before negotiating a purchase. They objected to have Mr. Wrench, the landlord Commissioner, secured in his position, while the other Commissioners, Mr. Bailey and Mr. Finucane, were to hold office “during pleasure.”<sup>3</sup> And Mr. Russell vehemently protested against the proposed rent-charge payable to the State even after the sixty-eight years during which the terminable annuity was payable. Finally, larger powers, and especially compulsory powers for acquiring land, were demanded for the Congested Districts Board.

<sup>1</sup> Hansard, cxxii. 66.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 148.

<sup>3</sup> This provision was altered by the Evicted Tenants Act of 1907, under which Mr. Bailey and Mr. Finucane were given a judicial tenure.

Though these objections were urged with great ability, Mr. Wyndham on some points was unyielding. He would do nothing for the labourers, nor would he give compulsory powers to the Congested Districts Board, and he insisted on not having any decadal reductions, nor would he abolish the zones. But he consented to abolish the perpetual rent charge ; he admitted non-judicial tenants to the benefits of the Bill ; he consented to do something real for the evicted tenants ; and he placed all the Estates Commissioners beyond the reach of arbitrary dismissal.<sup>1</sup> Through all the stages of the Bill his tact, his care, his patience, his conciliatory manner, his complete mastery of all the details of the measure, were beyond all praise, and merited encomiums from all quarters of the House. Almost with unanimity the third reading was passed. In the Lords some minor amendments were inserted, and in part agreed to in the House of Commons, and at last the Bill was turned into an Act of Parliament.<sup>2</sup> It was not a perfect piece of legislation, but it was an enormous advance on anything which had preceded it, and was rightly described by Mr. T. W. Russell as "the greatest measure passed for Ireland since the Union."<sup>3</sup>

The landlords had certainly fared well. In most cases their estates were mortgaged at a high rate of interest. The extinction of these mortgages was calculated to be equal to two years' purchase money, the bonus equal to three years, the taking over the law costs by the Estates Commission was equal to another year. It was an enormous advantage to get cash instead of land stock, which within the previous years had sunk well below par. And a most advantageous provision for the landlord was that he could sell all his estate and then buy back his residence and demesne on easy terms. This was considered equal to two years' purchase.<sup>4</sup> Seeing, then, on the one hand the many inducements the landlord had to sell, and on the other the feverish anxiety of the tenant to be done with

<sup>1</sup> Hansard, cxxii. cxxiii. cxxiv. cxxv., especially cxxv. 1322-9 — Mr. Redmond's Speech.

<sup>2</sup> *Annual Register*, pp. 181-2.

<sup>3</sup> Hansard, cxxv. 1349.

<sup>4</sup> Davitt's *Fall of Feudalism*, pp. 710-12 ; see copy of the Act.



landlordism and to become the owner of his farm, it was little wonder that bargains were quickly entered into and that land purchase proceeded rapidly.

It proceeded too rapidly for the taste of some of the tenants' representatives. Mr. Dillon, for instance, had always looked askance at the Land Conference, and thought that Lord Dunraven and his friends were getting too much. He could not see why land which for the previous twenty years had been bought at 17 years' purchase, and often less, could now be worth 24 years' purchase, and even 27 years' purchase, and this without adding the bonus and other advantages. These latter were calculated to equal 6 years' purchase, so that the result of Wyndham's Act was to raise the price of land from 17 or 18 years' purchase to 30 years' or more. Mr. Davitt's views coincided with those of Mr. Dillon. Mr. Sexton was also on the same side, and with his great financial ability had no difficulty in proving, in the pages of the *Freeman's Journal*, that the tenants who were buying under Wyndham's Act at the extravagant prices ruling were making a bad bargain.<sup>1</sup> Mr. William O'Brien, on the other hand, had gladly entered into the Land Conference and gladly signed its recommendations. He welcomed the Act of 1903, and wanted it carried out as rapidly as possible, so that landlordism should disappear. He knew well that under former Purchase Acts a lower rate of purchase prevailed. But the landlords who sold were those who were plunged in financial difficulties and had no option but to sell. These needy and embarrassed landlords were now sold out, and the landlords who remained were in most cases solvent and had no interest in selling unless very tempting inducements were held out to them. And Mr. O'Brien did not grudge to give them a high price, seeing that the tenants got the money at such a low rate of interest that, while giving an increased number of years' purchase, there was no corresponding increase in the amount of their own terminable annuities. Mr. O'Brien, indeed, became so indignant with the *Freeman's Journal* and its friends, that as a protest he resigned his seat in

<sup>1</sup> Davitt, pp. 709-10.

Parliament in January 1904. But his constituents at Cork were not willing to lose his services, and they re-elected him, thus showing that they approved of his conduct, as they disapproved of those who belittled the Land Conference and the legislation to which it gave rise. Nor did the tenants in other parts of Ireland differ from the Cork men ; and in spite of the arguments and figures of the *Freeman's Journal*, bargains were made every day ; and within the first year from the passing of Mr. Wyndham's Act land was sold amounting to £15,000,000.<sup>1</sup> The loans sanctioned, it is true, did not amount to more than a third of this amount ; but greater rapidity was to be expected when the initial difficulties of a new department were surmounted ; and the prospect was that in a few years the Land question, which had perplexed so many statesmen, would be finally settled.

But if compromise and conciliation had in this matter done so much, it might surely be tried in other directions, and in 1903 the landlords of the Land Conference Committee formed themselves into the Irish Reform Association. As Unionists they would not interfere with the Act of Union, and therefore they looked with disfavour on Home Rule. They could not indeed deny that Ireland had decayed since the Union, but they denied that this decay was a necessary consequence of the Union.<sup>2</sup> It was due to unjust taxation imposed on Ireland in direct opposition to Union promises and Union engagements ; to an anomalous system of centralized government, which was wasteful and extravagant, taking no account of popular representation and popular wishes ; to the fact that the English people did not yet appreciate Ireland's needs, and that the British Parliament was unable to attend fully to Irish business. As a remedy they proposed a devolution to Ireland of a larger measure of local government than she possessed.<sup>3</sup> They wanted to have set up an Irish Financial Council, partly elected, partly nominated, the business of which would

<sup>1</sup> *Annual Register*, p. 240.

<sup>2</sup> Lord Dunraven's *The Outlook in Ireland*, p. 141.

<sup>3</sup> Dunraven, pp. 272-82.



be to propose and submit the annual estimates for Ireland to the British Parliament. Given Irish revenue, less a fixed contribution for Imperial purposes, the Council would supervise and control every item of Irish expenditure; it would effect economies, check extravagance, promote efficiency in Irish government. In addition it was proposed to have a statutory body made up of Irish peers and Irish members of Parliament, as well as members of the Financial Council, this body to have the power of private Bill legislation, and such other powers as might be delegated to it from time to time by the British Parliament. Lord Dunraven and his colleagues wanted to see land purchase rapidly carried out; they wanted something done for the better housing of labourers; they wanted the whole system of education to be remodelled; and they admitted that in the matter of higher education the Catholics suffered grave injustice.<sup>1</sup>

This was Devolution. It fell far short of Mr. Gladstone's Home Rule, but nevertheless aimed at fundamental changes in Irish government, and went far beyond the emphatic negative of extreme Unionism. In Ireland its most noted exponent was Lord Dunraven. But it had friends in England too. It was widely believed that the King, in so far as he could express approval of any political association, was in its favour. It was well known that he was not unfriendly to Irish popular demands, and this accounts for the favourable reception he received in Ireland in 1903 and again in 1904. The Irish Viceroy, Lord Dudley, was certainly in accord with Lord Dunraven, and so was Mr. Balfour, and there could be little doubt as to the attitude of Mr. Wyndham. In the end of 1902 he appointed Sir Antony MacDonnell Under-Secretary for Ireland. Sir Antony was an Irish Catholic who had greatly distinguished himself in the Indian Civil Service, and had just retired after having spent nearly forty years in India. To Mr. Wyndham's offer of the Irish post he answered that he was "attracted by the chance of doing some good for Ireland." But a man who had ruled millions of men in India,

<sup>1</sup> Dunraven, pp. 233-4.

who was a member of the Indian Council, and might if he wished be Governor of Bombay, was not willing to be the mere head of an Irish department. And he told Mr. Wyndham that he was an Irish Catholic and a Liberal, and was not going to lay aside his religious or political convictions, nor could he accept a mere secretarial position. If he went to Ireland as Under-Secretary, he should be Mr. Wyndham's colleague rather than his subordinate; he should have adequate opportunities of influencing the policy and acts of the Irish Administration. "In Ireland," he said, "my aim would be the maintenance of order, the solution of the Land question on the basis of voluntary sale, the fixing of rents where sales may not take place on some self-acting principle whereby local inquiries would be obviated; the co-ordination, control, and direction of Boards and other administrative agencies; the settlement of the Education question in the general spirit of Mr. Balfour's views; and the general promotion of material improvement and administrative conciliation." Mr. Wyndham accepted Sir Antony's conditions, and so did Mr. Balfour, and one of the first results of the new departure in Unionist policy was the Land Purchase Act of 1903.<sup>1</sup>

The Orange landlords had no objection to a Purchase Act which filled their pockets with hard cash and unduly inflated the price of Irish land. But when it was proposed further to take counsel with Catholic Bishops and concede their claims in the matter of University education, they took instant and violent alarm. Long accustomed to monopoly and privilege, to domination rather than equality, they wanted no Hercules to cleanse the Augean stable of Dublin Castle; and all through 1904 their language about Sir Antony MacDonnell was that of bitter denunciation. A Papist Under-Secretary, they said, in league with Papists, was the ruler of Ireland, and under a Conservative Government loyal Orangemen were betrayed. As for Lord Dunraven and his colleagues of the Reform Association, they were but Home Rulers in disguise, traitors within the fortress ready to throw open the gates to the besiegers.

<sup>1</sup> Dunraven, pp. 288-90.



On the platform and in the press, in speeches and in writing, in resolutions and leading articles, the party of ascendancy indulged alternately in lamentation and defiance. Mr. Wyndham's courage failed him, and wishing to allay the storm, he was careful to announce that he disapproved of Lord Dunraven's programme.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Balfour was equally scared by the roll of the Orange drum, and hastened to find refuge in denial and retreat. But Sir Antony MacDonnell remained unmoved. He is a man who has never known fear, and he had Drummond's contempt for Orange insolence and Orange bigotry, for Orange threats and Orange bravado, knowing well that Orange courage was no better than that of Bob Acres. His resignation would have eased the situation for Mr. Wyndham, and would, no doubt, have been welcomed by Mr. Balfour. But Sir Antony had in no way violated the conditions under which he took office, and was in no humour to surrender to unreasoning clamour. In these circumstances Mr. Wyndham resolved to efface himself, and early in 1905 resigned the office of Chief Secretary.<sup>2</sup> His successor was Mr. Walter Long, a man who knew little about Ireland, but was well known to have no sympathy with devolution or indeed with any reform. He was therefore welcomed as a friend of reactionary landlords and Orange lodges, and continued to hold office to the end of the existing Parliament.

Then came the General Election of 1906. The Unionists had then spent nearly twenty years in office. Home Rule was responsible for their victory of 1886, Liberal divisions for that of 1895, and in 1900 they had triumphed because the country believed the war was over. But it continued for two years more, and involved the loss of many thousands of lives and the expenditure of £250,000,000, and the conquered territory was filled with ruined townships and blackened farm-houses, with the wailing of widows and orphans, and the muttered curses against England of beaten and disaffected Boers. Many now thought that these horrors might have been avoided, and even President Kruger's obstinacy overcome, if Mr.

<sup>1</sup> *Annual Register*, pp. 242-3.

<sup>2</sup> *Review of Reviews*, March 1905.

Chamberlain had been less imperious and aggressive. And surely it was his duty before going to war to see that the British Empire was prepared. Yet a Royal Commission found in August 1903 that the Government was hopelessly unprepared when war broke out. The Generals sent to Africa got no definite instructions, the ammunition supplied was defective, the rifles unsuitable, the uniforms of the wrong colour, and the disasters and mishaps which occurred showed plainly that the Generals selected were not equal to their commands.<sup>1</sup> At the critical moment Mr. Chamberlain turned public attention from these things by resigning his seat in the Cabinet in September 1903, the better to advocate Tariff Reform. Maintaining that Free Trade was a mistake, he proposed that taxes should be imposed on foreign imported manufactures, and that corn and bacon should be taxed; while, as a result of closer commercial relations with the Colonies, colonial imports might be admitted as heretofore.<sup>2</sup> But the English voter wanted cheap food and would have neither protective taxation nor preferential tariffs, and the Liberal leaders took the field against Mr. Chamberlain. A good section of the Unionists, under the Duke of Devonshire, clung to Free Trade, and founded the Free Food League.<sup>3</sup> All through 1904 and 1905 the battle was waged. Other matters which militated against the Government were their Licensing Bill, giving compensation for licences extinguished,<sup>4</sup> and the admission of Chinese to work in the Transvaal mines.<sup>5</sup> The tide turned early in 1904 and continued at all the by-elections of that and the following year; and when the General Election came, in January 1906, the Unionists were overwhelmed. Counting Tories and Liberal Unionists, only 158 of them were returned, Mr. Balfour himself being among those who fell on the field of battle.

In Ireland there was rejoicing. West Belfast had been captured from the Tories, and shortly after the General Election both Mr. O'Brien and Mr. Healy, who had been outside the

<sup>1</sup> *Annual Register*, pp. 189-91.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* for 1903, pp. 197-200, 206-12.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 228-9.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* for 1904, p. 188.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* 47.



party, came back to the fold, and henceforth the whole Nationalist strength of 83 members was at the service of Ireland. It was matter for congratulation also that the new Premier was Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, a man who had never wavered in his Home Rule convictions. And there were such staunch Home Rulers in the new Cabinet as Mr. Morley, Mr. Lloyd-George, Mr. Bryce, Mr. Birrell, and Lords Tweedmouth and Loreburn. On the other hand the Liberal Imperialists were largely represented. Sir Edward Grey was made Foreign Secretary, Mr. Haldane Secretary for War, Mr. Asquith Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Cabinet offices were also given to Sir Henry Fowler and Lord Crewe. All these were politicians of the type of Lord Rosebery, and cared little for Home Rule. The new Lord-Lieutenant was Lord Aberdeen, so favourably known already in Ireland. The new Chief Secretary was Mr. Bryce, a great scholar, a great linguist, a great traveller, an author of repute, an expert on questions of constitutional law, and thoroughly sound on the question of Home Rule. For the moment, however, this latter question had receded into the background. It had not been made an issue at the General Election, and therefore all hope of having a Home Rule Bill introduced in the immediate future must be abandoned. For the Irish Nationalists, even with the aid of the Unionists, were powerless against the enormous numbers on the Liberal side. But there were other Irish questions claiming urgent attention. There was, for instance, a difficulty in financing sales under Wyndham's Act, and there were the questions of congestion, of the evicted tenants, and of University education. Nothing was done, however, in the session of 1906, and early in 1907 Mr. Bryce left Ireland to take up the position of British Ambassador at Washington.

In 1904 Mr. Stead suggested that Mr. T. W. Russell should be appointed Chief Secretary for Ireland,<sup>1</sup> and in 1907 he would have been an admirable selection. Mr. Russell is a Scotchman born, but has lived since his boyhood in Ireland, and, like many others who have come over, he has become

<sup>1</sup> *Review of Reviews*, February 1904.

"more Irish than the Irish themselves." Not born in the purple, he has not had a University training, but has instead graduated in the university of the world. Gifted with great natural ability, he has always been fond of books, and by industry, perseverance, sobriety, and thrift has been able to educate himself and win his way to position and influence. As Secretary to the Irish Temperance Association, he had for many years to exercise largely both his voice and pen, and with such effect that when he entered Parliament in 1885 he was even then a ready and powerful debater. In the years following he was often heard on public questions in Parliament, on the platform, and in the pages of reviews. He was then a Liberal-Unionist, and in Lord Salisbury's Government of 1895 was given the office of Secretary to the Local Government Board. But Mr. Russell is not a mere time-server, and in spite of Lord Salisbury's frowns he championed Ulster tenants against Ulster landlords, and in consequence was deprived of office in 1900. After that date he continued to advocate compulsory sale. He had a large share in the Land Conference and in Wyndham's Act; he favoured the grant of a Catholic University, the reinstatement of the evicted tenants, and better houses for labourers; and he grew to dislike more and more the bureaucratic government of Dublin Castle. While retaining the grit and tenacity of the Scotchman, Mr. Russell has acquired the Irishman's warmth of heart and kindly nature. His eye kindles as he denounces Irish landlord iniquity, and his voice grows husky as he talks of the struggling artisan or labourer in his humble cottage, or of the rack-rented tenant driven from his fields. By 1907 Mr. Russell had grown to be one of the most powerful men on the Liberal side of the House of Commons, one of the greatest Parliamentarians of his time. His great talents, his courage, his resource, his thorough knowledge of Ireland and her needs, eminently fitted him for the post of Chief Secretary. But he had to be satisfied with the lesser position of Vice-President of the Agricultural Board in succession to Sir Horace Plunkett, while the higher position of Chief Secretary fell to an Englishman, Mr. Birrell.



Until he became a Cabinet Minister in 1906, Mr. Birrell was best known as an author. There is surely no finer specimen of high-class literary gossip than his delightful essays.<sup>1</sup> Passing rapidly from Milton and Johnson to Carlyle and Matthew Arnold, from Swift and Bolingbroke to De Quincey and Newman, and back again to Richardson and Pope and Burke, he seems familiar with everything written by these authors, and indeed with everything written by the great masters in English literature. Without a trace of pedantry, we can see that his knowledge is encyclopædic, that he has not only read, but read with care, that his literary judgments, though not pretending to profundity, are never arbitrary, and will survive the assaults of even seasoned critics, and that from the first page to the last there is not a dull line. Incidentally we learn that he is a Nonconformist and does not like the Catholic Church, though he has unbounded admiration for Newman. Besides being a literary man of eminence, Mr. Birrell was also a lawyer of experience, and he had also made some brilliant speeches both on the platform and in Parliament. But as to his being a successful minister, Mr. Stead, in 1906, regarded him as "the darkest of dark horses." It soon appeared that the dark horse could go far, that the literary man and lawyer was a statesman as well; and in 1906 his conduct of the English Education Bill was beyond all praise. That it did not become an Act was due to the House of Lords and not to him, and such was the ability he showed that the Premier selected him to succeed Mr. Bryce.

His new position, the grave of many reputations, must have been accepted by him with misgiving, for the difficulties which confronted him were many. The Town Tenants Act passed in 1906 was but a small measure and did not satisfy the town tenants, because it did not sufficiently safeguard their interests. The evicted tenants and the labourers clamoured for legislation. Dublin Castle and all it represented in Irish Government still remained. The University question remained unsettled. The land sales effected under Wyndham's Act of 1903 were not yet

<sup>1</sup> *Birrell's Essays*, London, 1899, 2 vols.

carried through, for the landlord could not get his money nor the tenant his land. The Congested Districts Board had done much to help local industries, and to erect piers, and harbours, and fishing-stations along the coast; but so far it had merely nibbled at the big and complex problem of migration in the West. Nor was it easy for any Board or any official to solve any such problem and at the same time satisfy public opinion, seeing the attack that was made in Parliament in 1907 on Mr. Commissioner Bailey. Under the Land Purchase Act of 1903, Mr. Wrench was intended to represent the landlords' interest, and in this respect he had never been remiss. Mr. Finucane was expected to regard land transactions from the tenants' point of view. The third Commissioner, Mr. Bailey, was expected to hold the balance between the two. In reality he had been appointed originally as an Assistant Land Commissioner by the Tories, and could not be said at any time to be unduly severe on the landlords in his decisions. Modest, retiring, and unassuming, he is a man of enormous ability, with a fine judicial mind, a perfect master of all the intricacies of Irish land legislation, a man whose capacity and zeal in the public service only a bitter partisan could call in question. The Report he wrote on the happy results of land purchase previous to 1903 is a most valuable State document, in which he carefully points out the punctuality with which the tenants paid their annuities, the improvements they effected on their lands by way of fencing, draining, building, and tillage, the sobriety and thrift which followed extravagance and want of care for the morrow.<sup>1</sup> This Report was of material assistance to Mr. Wyndham, and ensured Mr. Bailey's promotion under Mr. Wyndham's Act. Since then Mr. Bailey had been careful in all land sales to see that the tenant did not agree to terms which would have been ruinous for himself and for the State, and he had done nothing more. But this was not enough for unreasoning landlords and their unreasoning friends, and Mr.

<sup>1</sup> "Report of Mr. W. F. Bailey of an Inquiry into the Present Condition of Tenant Purchasers under the Land Purchase Acts" (ordered by the House of Commons to be printed, 25th March 1903).



Moore, M.P., an Ulster representative, attacked Mr. Bailey in Parliament. The latter was ably defended by his friend, Mr. T. W. Russell, who was able to produce some letters written by Mr. Moore, in which that gentleman reminded Mr. Bailey that he owed his appointment to the Tories, and that he had failed to do the landlords' work, and therefore when the Tories got back to office they would know how to mark their disapprobation of his conduct. In other words, they had already marked out Mr. Bailey for vengeance. Mr. Birrell, who agreed with Mr. Russell in condemning Mr. Moore and in defending Mr. Bailey, had thus early in his official career as Chief Secretary an opportunity of appreciating the character of Irish landlordism in its extreme form, and how great were the difficulties of satisfying its insatiable demands.<sup>1</sup>

Nor was this all. The Irish Nationalists themselves were not in agreement. Mr. Dillon objected to have the loss involved in the flotation of Irish land stock thrown on Irish revenue, and he would prefer to see the tenants wait rather than enter into the ruinous bargains they were making with these landlords; and the great majority of the Irish party agreed with Mr. Dillon. Mr. O'Brien was in a greater hurry to end the land war, and wanted to see the tenants purchase even though the price paid was high. Both agreed that there was need for fresh land legislation. Mr. Dillon would have this brought about by threatening the landlords with a renewal of agitation. Mr. O'Brien's plan was to confer with the landlords as in 1903, for no Government could reject a united demand, and the House of Lords would be sure to yield. These differences gave strength to those who had no faith in Parliamentary action, and in 1905 the Sinn Fein party was formed. As its name implies—for Sinn Fein is Irish for Our-selves—it aimed at National Independence, believing that the British Government was Ireland's greatest enemy, and that the British Parliament had no right to legislate for Ireland, having formally renounced such a right in 1783. Inculcating national self-reliance and self-respect, the Sinn Feiners would have Irish

<sup>1</sup> *Annual Register*.

history studied in every college and school, the Irish language, folk-lore, dances, songs, and sports revived, the people consume less drink and tobacco, and favour Irish manufactures rather than those which came from England or abroad. As for the Irish members of Parliament, they could, with delegates from the County and other Councils, sit in Dublin as a National Council, whose business it would be "to take within its purview every question of National interest." The Council could not legislate, but it could pass resolutions which would be adopted and acted upon by the local Councils and obeyed throughout the land. It is not easy to see how this policy could be carried out successfully in a country where there are, and always have been, so many divisions, and in spite of the opposition of a great Empire. But it had been done in Hungary, and many thought it could be done in Ireland, and in consequence the Sinn Feiners grew strong,<sup>1</sup> and in 1907 were a source of uneasiness and alarm to the Irish Party. They added also to Mr. Birrell's difficulties, as did in a much greater degree those tenants who lived in congested districts and were crying out for more and better land. In 1906 a Royal Commission had been appointed to investigate the condition of the congested districts, the working of the Congested Districts Board, and its relations with the Estates Commission and the Agricultural Department, and what changes, if any, in the functions of these various bodies ought to be made. Voluminous evidence was taken all through 1907, and not until 1908 was the Report of the Commission issued. But meantime the impatient farmers would not be restrained, and knowing of old that the best way to change a law in Ireland is to break it, they made war on the graziers by driving the cattle and sheep off the grazing farms. The landlords howled for coercion, the Irish members called for land legislation. But Mr. Birrell would have no coercion, satisfied that the ordinary law was sufficient; and he would have no Land Bill until he had the Congested Commission Report. In the interval he bethought himself of Sir Antony MacDonnell's programme of a "co-

<sup>1</sup> *Irish Year-Book* for 1909, pp. 356-9.



ordination, control, and direction of Boards and other administrative agencies,"<sup>1</sup> and in the session of 1907 he brought in his Irish Councils Bill.

This was Lord Dunraven's policy of Devolution, and was, of course, an attack on Dublin Castle. Nor could any defence be made of that ancient institution. A den of infamy, a sink of corruption, the nurse of traitors, the refuge of renegades, were but a few of the terms which Irishmen have angrily hissed out at the very mention of Dublin Castle. Within its grimy walls what plots have been hatched against Irish liberty, what dark deeds have been done, what wicked men have ruled! The kidnapped chiefs of Tyrconnell and Tyrone were prisoners in its keep; the Cromwellians held counsel there when they were driving the Irish into slavery; and Castlereagh and Clare when they were goading the men of 1798 into rebellion. From its doors honesty and public spirit were driven; within its walls virtue died; and while it welcomed the spy and the informer, it sent the patriot to the scaffold. Not in Europe is there a system of Government like that controlled and directed by Dublin Castle. A number of unrepresentative Boards, usually inefficient, and manned by chiefs who care nothing for Ireland—this is Irish administration. The Chief Secretary controls everything—police, magistrates, law officers, prisons, lunatics, land, education, local government. He is head of all these Boards, which so often overlap and collide, and Mr. Birrell recently declared that as President of one Department he was constantly in conflict with himself as President of another Department.<sup>2</sup> Usually the Chief Secretary is an Englishman and knows nothing of Ireland. The Under-Secretary, who does, is a permanent official, and has enormous power. As Mr. O'Brien puts it, he is "the man at the wheel,"<sup>3</sup> controlling everything from the rural policeman to the Inspector-General, from the Court bailiff to the Attorney-General. A strong man like Drummond can do much good or he can do much harm, and usually the Under-Secretary is an enemy of

<sup>1</sup> Dunraven, p. 289.

<sup>2</sup> Barry O'Brien's *Dublin Castle*, p. 24.

<sup>3</sup> P. 33.

the people. And hence the Castle opposed every reform from Emancipation to Disestablishment, from the Commutation of Tithes to Gladstone's Land Act.<sup>1</sup>

It was to reform this system of government, which was a satire on representative institutions, an anachronism in the twentieth century, that Mr. Birrell brought in his Irish Councils Bill. He proposed to set up an Irish Council of 107 members, 84 elected and 23 nominated, one of the latter being the Under-Secretary. The elected members would sit in many cases for Parliamentary divisions, be elected by Parliamentary voters, and sit for three years. As an administrative but not a legislative body, they would take over the powers of the National and Intermediate Boards, the Local Government Board, reformatories and industrial schools, the Congested Districts and Agricultural Boards, and also some minor departments, such as the National Library and Royal Academy of Music; and they would have for all these purposes an income of nearly four millions and a quarter. Their resolutions would not be effective till approved by the Lord-Lieutenant, who might impose his veto and in some cases substitute resolutions of his own.<sup>2</sup> It was said that the Bill owed its origin to Sir Antony MacDonnell, and that in its first shape all the members were nominated with Sir Antony himself presiding. Ireland would thus have, said one critic, an Indian Council with an Indian satrap in the chair. Mr. Birrell showed no great enthusiasm for these proposals, which were certainly meagre and grudging. The Irish leaders, Mr. Redmond and Mr. Dillon, while in vain pressing for a larger measure, did not reject the one offered. But a National Convention in Dublin in May rejected it with scorn, and the Bill was accordingly dropped. And yet thoughtful men may ask was this action wise? The Bill was not offered as Home Rule, or as a substitute for it; it would probably have been amended, and with these amendments would have worked well. The County and District Councils, set up by the Act of 1898, had on the whole satisfactorily discharged their duties; and if

<sup>1</sup> O'Brien, p. 101.

<sup>2</sup> Copy of the Bill.



the National Council was equally successful, its powers would be certainly enlarged and its income increased, until at last perhaps Home Rule would be reached. The Convention, however, did not think the Bill worth taking. The result has been that no better Bill has since been introduced, and in March 1908 Mr. Asquith and Mr. Birrell, speaking for the Liberal Government, would give no promise that Home Rule would be a living issue at the next General Election.<sup>1</sup>

At the Convention a resolution was passed expressing regret at the death of Mr. Michael Davitt. He died in the summer of 1906. Fenian, Land Leaguer, labour leader, newspaper writer, popular orator and member of Parliament, his had been a stormy and eventful career. The peasant's son who had lost his right arm as a boy, and thus maimed had to earn a living in a strange land, and who amid these difficulties had educated himself, until he was a fluent speaker and could write articles in high-class reviews, was no common man. Like many self-made men, he was often arrogant and dogmatic, and on the Education question, which he imperfectly understood, his attitude and language towards the Bishops of his own Church were often offensive. But there could be no doubt about his honesty and earnestness; and the patience with which he bore sufferings in prison which would have broken another's spirit was not more remarkable than the generosity with which he forgave his foes. He lies buried in his own native Straide, under the shadow of a ruined Dominican Abbey. Nearly sixty years before he had been driven forth from the peaceful valley where he had played with childish glee. He had struck back with effect in his manhood, and as the shades of night thickened round him he had the satisfaction of knowing that Irish landlordism was doomed. It was Davitt's work in this direction which was best appreciated, and which caused his death to be so much regretted by the Irish race throughout the world.

In the summer and autumn of 1907 the Congested Board Commission continued its sittings, and evidence was supplied

<sup>1</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, March 31, 1908.

in plenty that if people were to live by the land congestion must be relieved. Nor were the poorer districts in the extreme west the only ones which cried out for legislation. Away to the east, by the banks of the Shannon, within sight of historic Clanmacnoise, lies the parish of Moore. Its parish priest, the Rev. T. J. Reidy, had to tell the Commissioners that 300 out of the 400 tenants in his parish were valued at less than £10 a year, and 100 at less than £5. And within the parish were two men holding between them 4000 acres of land over which cattle and sheep roamed, and not an acre were they willing to give the tenants. In such circumstances it was difficult to keep the people in restraint, and in many districts cattle-driving went on. It was, of course, a milder form of lawlessness than the agrarian crimes of other days, but it was nevertheless a violation of law, and if Sir Antony MacDonnell had had his way he would have given the cattle-drivers short shrift. Mr. T. W. Russell favoured milder measures. At Athenry in Galway a large farm belonging to the Agricultural Department was coveted by the landless townsmen; a house was burned, the meadows spiked, and threats uttered that the Department would be driven out of the district. Mr. Russell came from Dublin and talked to the people and their priest, and found that while the townsmen could get neither milk nor vegetables because of the want of land, there was a large grazing farm just outside the ruined walls of the historic little town. Using his influence, he had the town bought out and the grazing farm divided among the townsmen, and then peace succeeded war. Mr. Birrell was not in a position to adopt Mr. Russell's policy in other districts. But he evidently preferred it to the Under-Secretary's, and instead of coercion resolved to rely on the ordinary law. Further, he was able in the session of 1907 to have an Evicted Tenants Bill passed, and he only waited for the Report of the Congested Commission to have an amending Land Bill introduced.

So far Mr. Birrell could not boast of his legislative record, for he had failed to pass the English Education Bill of 1906 and the Irish Councils Bill of the following year. But in



1908 he succeeded in passing the Irish Universities Bill. No other problem had been found so difficult of solution by English statesmen as this of higher education in Ireland. It had baffled Peel and Gladstone, it had not been solved by the establishment of the Royal University, and it had daunted Mr. Balfour, who had often freely admitted that something should be done.<sup>1</sup> The abolition of religious tests in Trinity College as far back as 1873 left that institution still Protestant. Its Provost was still a Protestant clergyman; within its walls were a Protestant Divinity School and a Protestant place of worship; the whole atmosphere of the place was redolent of Protestantism, and of its 1000 students only 100 were Catholics.<sup>2</sup> The Queen's College, Belfast, had developed into a Presbyterian University College, and the Colleges of Cork and Galway were but godless colleges. Catholics might indeed get degrees from the Royal University by passing an examination; but they were denied the higher intellectual training, the continued contact with men of learning, the friendly rivalries of the class-room and the cricket field, the cultured intercourse inseparable from real University life. To discover a remedy for this state of things a Viceregal Commission, under the presidency of Lord Robertson, was appointed in 1901, and furnished its Report in 1903. As Trinity College was not included in the scope of the inquiry, the Commissioners had no recommendations to make in its regard. They recommended, however, that the Royal University should be turned into a teaching federal University, with the three Queen's Colleges and a new College in Dublin as constituent colleges. The College in Dublin would be for the Catholics, well endowed and equipped, such as might enter into rivalry with Trinity College on something like equal terms.<sup>3</sup>

This Report was not followed up by legislation, and in 1904 Lord Dunraven proposed in the newspapers that Dublin University should become the one National University of

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Walsh's *The Irish University Question*, p. 194.

<sup>2</sup> Dunraven's *Outlook in Ireland*, p. 125; *Fry Commission Report*.

<sup>3</sup> *Robertson Commission Report*.

Dublin, with Trinity College, a College for Catholics at Dublin, and the three Queen's Colleges as constituent Colleges. In none of these Colleges would there be any religious tests. To these proposals Mr. Wyndham and Sir Antony MacDonnell were friendly, and the Catholics not unfriendly. Against them Trinity College set its face, and such was the influence it could command that the Government did nothing. When the Liberals came into office a new Commission was appointed under an English Judge, Sir Edward Fry, this time to enquire into the condition of Trinity College. In 1907 the Commissioners issued their Report. All agreed that Trinity College was no place for Catholics and could not be reformed to suit them, not even if, as Trinity College itself suggested, a Catholic Church was erected within its walls. A minority of Commissioners adopted the Robertson Commission Report; but a majority, led by Chief Baron Pallas, followed in the footsteps of Lord Dunraven, making Dublin University with five constituent Colleges a National University. Mr. Bryce, the Chief Secretary, favoured this latter proposal, and promised to give it legislative form at an early date. Dr. Walsh, the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin, also approved, as did most of the influential Catholic laymen, believing it would be well for the Catholics to be associated with so ancient and famous a seat of learning, and would help perhaps to soften sectarian rancour. But Dr. Healy, Archbishop of Tuam, and a majority of the Catholic Bishops, had no desire to be associated with an institution which had always been a centre and stronghold of religious bigotry. Trinity College itself was vehemently opposed to join either with Presbyterian or Catholic; and when Mr. Birrell came to Ireland he found that the friends of Trinity College would be strong enough and determined enough to defeat Mr. Bryce's proposals. He also found that Belfast was anxious for a Presbyterian University.

Leaving, then, Trinity College to hug its privileges and enjoy its ill-gotten gains in sullen isolation, voluntarily removed outside the current of National life, Mr. Birrell in his Bill set up two Universities, the National in Dublin with the Queen's



Colleges of Cork and Galway and a new College at Dublin as constituent Colleges, and Belfast University with the single College at Belfast. The Royal University was to disappear. Galway College was given an income of £12,000 a year; Cork £20,000; the new College at Dublin £32,000; an additional £10,000 went to the National University, and a sum of £150,000 for buildings. Belfast College got £28,000; Belfast University £10,000, with £60,000 for buildings. The pecuniary provision in the case of Dublin was thus totally inadequate. In neither University were there to be any religious tests, and in this respect they were no better than the godless colleges of Peel. But the Senators of the National University and the governing bodies of the Colleges at Dublin, Cork, and Galway are in the main Catholic; and it is this which generates a Catholic atmosphere and has made them acceptable to Catholics. Similarly the ruling authority at Belfast is in the main Presbyterian. This solution of the University difficulty, which was favoured by Mr. Dillon, and indeed followed the lines already sketched by him in one of his public speeches, was certainly the easiest, and Mr. Birrell was heartily congratulated. Mr. Balfour for the Opposition, Mr. Redmond and Mr. Dillon for the Irish Nationalists, Sir Edward Carson for Trinity College, were all ready with their approval. But there was opposition from a small section of British Nonconformists, always ready to exclude from education every religion but their own, and from the Ulster Orangemen, with whom bigotry is an inherited instinct and hatred of Catholicism a battle-cry. The Bill, however, passed its second reading by 344 to 31 votes.

In Committee the same opposition fought hard to destroy the Bill, and it was at that stage that Mr. Birrell deserved all the praise he received. That he was a strong man he had already shown by his resistance to the Unionist cry for coercion; that he was an eloquent speaker had been shown on the platform and in Parliament; and the dullest could not fail to appreciate his brilliant wit and his readiness of reply. But in the dull routine work of Committee all his powers were called forth.

Patient with bore and bigot, with Ulster Orangeman and British Nonconformist, he was suave or stern, plausible or sarcastic as the occasion demanded ; ready to yield some small point for the sake of peace and progress, but hard as adamant when some vital principle of the Bill was assailed. No other Englishman would have steered the Bill so safely, no other pilot would have saved the vessel from being driven on the rocks. Mr. Birrell had the courage to advance where Mr. Balfour fell back ; he succeeded where even Gladstone failed ; and if he never did anything else for Ireland but this, he deserves a lasting place in her memory.



## CHAPTER XX

### *Literary and Industrial Movements*

WRITING of Ireland about 1770, and writing of what he knew from personal knowledge, Sir Jonah Barrington has left us a lively description of the Irish country gentleman of that day. His family mansion was large, the outcome of many plans, "an uncouth mass warring with every rule of symmetry in architecture." Its interior was in keeping with its ungraceful exterior. Some of the rooms were wainscotted, some were not wainscotted at all. Fishing-rods, powder-flasks, firearms decorated the hall. In the rooms the furniture was scanty; on the walls hung a few racing prints; there were a few small shaving-glasses for the men, a few mirrors for the ladies, and in the kitchen the maid-servants had nothing but a tub of water to reflect their charms. As for the library, it had neither chairs nor tables, and on its shelves the books were scanty: the Journals of the House of Commons, Clarendon's *History*, the works of Swift and Berkeley, the *History of the Bible*, a few novels, a few numbers of the *Guardian* and of the *Spectator*, a few books dealing with gardening and with the horse—and that was all. Caring nothing for painting or music or books, the country gentleman knew much of horses and dogs, rode and shot and fished, fought duels, attended races and cock-fights, was rudely and riotously hospitable, and drank unlimited quantities of claret and "rum sherbet," with the usual result of being afflicted with the gout. His bright blue cloak wrapped around him, he often walked abroad in his ill-kept garden, or sat indoors in the midst of cobwebs and dirt to decide disputes between his tenants or receive rents from them. Being a Protestant and sometimes a bigot, he despised them as Papists

and treated them as slaves, though he agreed with them in hating the tithe-proctor, and was willing to protect them from every oppression but his own.<sup>1</sup>

There were, however, exceptions, and there is no difficulty in admitting that Barrington's statements are too general and that his pictures are overdrawn. Young, who visited Ireland about the same time, was less given to exaggeration, and is therefore more reliable. He noted indeed the wretched condition of the tenantry, the insolence of too many of the landlords, the large number of absentees,<sup>2</sup> the low state of tillage.<sup>3</sup> But he also noted that excessive drinking was not so common as formerly, that duelling was less, that the roads were good, that within the last twenty-five years trade had greatly increased,<sup>4</sup> that the older country houses were being replaced by new ones built in better taste; and he was specially pleased with the fine residences of Lord Powerscourt in Wicklow, of Lord Bangor in Down, and of Sir Capel Molyneux in Armagh.<sup>5</sup> In spite of premiums given by the Royal Dublin Society, the silk manufacture languished; but the linen manufacture was all over Ulster and was spreading into Connaught.<sup>6</sup> Among the cities and towns Galway had decayed;<sup>7</sup> Waterford, however, had the finest quay that Young had seen;<sup>8</sup> and Limerick, with its 32,000 inhabitants, had its hackney chaises and Sedan chairs, its plays and concerts;<sup>9</sup> while Cork, with its 67,000 inhabitants, exported yearly in beef and butter, in hides and woollen yarn, and other articles, goods valued at more than a million pounds.<sup>10</sup> Belfast was as yet only a small town; but Dublin, with more than 150,000 inhabitants, was the second city in the Empire. Its streets, it is true, were ill-kept, its government inefficient, its magistrates corrupt, its prisons dens of infamy, its street brawls frequent.<sup>11</sup> But, on the other hand, signs of wealth and culture abounded. Music was cultivated,

<sup>1</sup> Barrington's *Personal Sketches*, pp. 1-7; Lecky, i. 289-91.

<sup>2</sup> Young's *Tour in Ireland*, ii. 115-17.

<sup>3</sup> P. 22.

<sup>4</sup> Vol. ii. 151-4, 253-5.

<sup>5</sup> Vol. i. 101, 124, 143.

<sup>6</sup> Vol. i. 217; vol. ii. 137.

<sup>7</sup> Lecky's *Ireland*, i. 350.

<sup>8</sup> Vol. i. 408.

<sup>9</sup> Vol. i. 295.

<sup>10</sup> Vol. i. 333.

<sup>11</sup> *The Sham Squire*, xvi. 70-83.



theatres patronized, newspapers published, booksellers thriving, Dublin University famous, and the House of Parliament in College Green would have adorned the first city in Europe. The town houses of the nobility and gentry were built and furnished with taste. Young was specially pleased with the fine house of the Duke of Leinster; at Lord Charlemont's he saw pictures by Rembrandt and Titian;<sup>1</sup> and in Lord Moira's house was a fine picture-gallery. Carriages were common in the streets; there was a constant round of parties, dinners, suppers, and balls, and in the houses of the higher classes everything was characterized by good taste.<sup>2</sup>

The abolition of the commercial restraints, the relaxation of the penal code, the concession of legislative independence, followed two years later by the passage of Foster's Corn Law, all concurred in effecting great changes. Sectarian rancour was appreciably diminished, rents were paid with greater punctuality, taxes were light though the Government was corrupt; and in the writings of Ledwich and Vallancey, of Archdall and Charles O'Connor, something like an Irish literary revival appeared. The greater area of land broken up and the improved system of tillage increased the amount of agricultural produce, and gave additional employment to the labouring poor. A system of bounties judiciously employed rapidly stimulated industrial enterprise. Not only the linen manufacture, but also the woollen, silk, cotton, and glass manufactures grew prosperous. Dublin, more than ever the centre of the wealthy and cultured classes, increased in splendour and beauty. In finely-built houses rich furniture was to be seen, the paintings of the old masters hung upon the walls, and the carriages and horses which thronged the North Circular Road resembled the bustle and opulence seen in Hyde Park. Grattan and Plunkett, and Bushe and Ponsonby were then heard in Parliament, and Curran in the law courts which his wit and eloquence so much adorned. Theatres, concert-halls, clubs, newspapers, rich shops, well-dressed inhabitants in the streets, were so many evidences of prosperity; and it is the testimony of Lord Clare,

<sup>1</sup> Vol. i. 18-20.

<sup>2</sup> Lecky, i. 322-9.

and therefore of a bitter enemy, that in the years preceding the Union, Ireland advanced more rapidly in wealth than any other country in Europe.<sup>1</sup>

Had the events of 1798 and 1800 not taken place, it is probable that warring classes and creeds would have been brought together, that a type of Irishman would have been soon evolved, who, though loyal to England, would have sought in Ireland his inspiration and his ideals. But the horrors of the Rebellion, and the treachery and corruption which accompanied the Act of Union, not only stayed the progress of reconciliation and appeasement, but perpetuated and intensified class hatred and sectarian rancour. A small minority, fresh from pillage and murder, and backed by England in what they did, regarded the rest of their countrymen as enemies and slaves. These latter, maddened by tyranny which they were powerless to destroy, were animated by the bitterest hostility to England. Relegated to the cabins of the poor, the Irish language continued to be despised by the educated and privileged classes, whose ambition was to speak and write like Englishmen, to ape English manners, and copy English modes of thought. They were more English than the English themselves. The National spirit, however, fostered on the fields of Wexford or among the Presbyterians of Belfast, found expression in the poems and ballads of Dr. Drennan and his friends, in such pieces as "Mary Le More" or the "Wake of William Orr."<sup>2</sup>

The extinction of the Irish Parliament, the symbol of Ireland's distinctive existence as a nation, was not calculated to strengthen or even to maintain the National spirit, and after the Union a period of stagnation and decay supervened. Nor had O'Connell any difficulty in showing to the British Parliament in 1834 that the Union had proved a curse to Ireland, resulting in increased indebtedness and increased taxation, in increasing absenteeism as well as the absolute power of tyrannical and grasping landlords, and in consequent increase of the misery and sufferings of the poor. Less wine, less silk, less tobacco

<sup>1</sup> Lecky, ii. 496-500; Lord Cloncurry's *Personal Recollections*, pp. 216-81.

<sup>2</sup> *Literary Remains of the United Irishmen*, i.-iii. 47.



were consumed, and even less meat, though the number of cattle exported to England was greater. The bustle and energy of so many cities and towns had been diminished, manufactures had everywhere decayed, and if we want to know the wretched condition of the millions of the peasants, we have it adequately described in the pages of the French De Beaumont or the German Kohl, or in the sober pages of the Devon Commission Report, all these being published some years subsequent to the speech of O'Connell.<sup>1</sup>

In the midst of such conditions it would be hard to expect any marked intellectual activity, still less anything like an Irish literary revival. Yet there were some Irish writers of the period who drew their inspiration from the land in which they were born. In 1808 a Gaelic Society was established at Dublin for the development of the "history, literary and ecclesiastical, of their Island." One of its members, William Halliday, wrote an Irish Grammar; Edward O'Reilly, another member, compiled an Irish Dictionary; Father Denis Taaffe wrote a History of Ireland. But the most remarkable member of the Gaelic Society was Dr. John Lanigan (1758-1828). Born in Cashel, educated at Rome, and then professor at the University of Pavia, he returned to Ireland and was for years librarian of the Royal Dublin Society. His great work is an *Ecclesiastical History of Ireland* in four volumes.<sup>2</sup> Written by a Catholic priest and from the Catholic point of view it is the product of enormous research, of great industry, of extensive historical learning. Lanigan has prejudices, but is not a bigot; he is sometimes intolerant, but it is of inaccuracy and presumptuous dulness; he is always well informed, always ready with his authorities, and never afraid to champion any cause or opinion which he believes right. On a much lower scale both in ability and learning were men like MacSweeney and Barrett and Raftery, who wrote both tales and poems. They wrote on peasants for the peasantry, and in the Irish language which

<sup>1</sup> *O'Connell's Speech*, April 1834; Kohl's *Ireland*; De Beaumont, *L'Irlande*.

<sup>2</sup> Fitzpatrick's *Irish Wits and Worthies*, pp. 126 *et seq.*

the peasantry understood, and some portion of what they wrote has survived.<sup>1</sup>

Carleton (1794-1869), who wrote in English, had infinitely more genius than any of these three. The son of a mother who knew little English, but loved to sing, as she did with feeling, old Irish songs, and of a father who had to the full the peasant's simple faith and the peasant's credulity, Carleton was thus enabled to describe the peasantry from within. The school which he first attended was a hedge-school, built of sods, with only a hole in the roof for a chimney and only a few large stones for the pupils' seats. When he attended mass he had to kneel in the open air—only a few stones served for an altar, this being covered; the people knelt in the open on bundles of straw which they had brought for the purpose from home.<sup>2</sup> When he proposed to become a priest, he had, in accordance with the custom of the time, to go to Munster as a poor scholar.<sup>3</sup> He soon returned and never became a priest, though in his journey south he acquired knowledge and experience which in after years served him well. Cradled in misery and oppression he was often made to feel that he belonged to a subject race and to a despised creed, and he remembered all that he had felt and seen. Careless, good-looking, a great dancer, a good athlete, a favourite with the girls, his habits were unsettled, his care for the future little. He went everywhere and mixed with all classes of the people, and when it is added that he changed his religion and died a Protestant, it will be seen that his experiences were entirely beyond the common.<sup>4</sup> In his writings there is no need for the play of the imagination, for he records his actual experiences, and in his pages the life and character of the Irish peasantry stand completely revealed, their weaknesses and their strength, their wit and humour, their generosity and kindliness of nature, their joys and their sorrows, their laughter and their tears. The dance and the fair, the pattern and the pilgrimage, the wedding and the wake, the

<sup>1</sup> Hyde's *Literary History*, pp. 605-6.

<sup>2</sup> O'Donoghue's *Carleton*, i. 4-11, 19-21, 36-37.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 65-72.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* 81-107.



fiddler and gossip and sanachie, the poor scholar, the priest and the parson, the landlord and the tithe-proctor, the grasping agent and the cheating attorney, all these flit through his pages, and are described by a master-hand.<sup>1</sup>

In the *Tales of the O'Hara Family* the Banims, John (1798-1842) and Michael (1796-1848), have also described Irish peasant life. They belonged to the middle class and had not, therefore, the intimate knowledge of the poorer classes which Carleton had, nor are their pictures so complete as his, though their pages abound in descriptions which are both powerful and true.<sup>2</sup> Miss Edgeworth (1767-1849) holds a higher place among novelists than either Carleton or the Banims, and has acquired a more extensive and more enduring fame. But she is less Irish than they. She writes from the landlords' point of view. She writes as belonging to the ruling class and to the favoured creed, as an Anglo-Irishwoman of the Pale, not indeed approving of landlord tyranny or landlord injustice, and not without sympathy for the oppressed; yet without any deep or passionate resentment for the wrongs inflicted on them, and without any vehement desire for change.<sup>3</sup> Lady Morgan (1777-1859) was more Irish. She was a Protestant with strong Catholic sympathies, and in her kindly treatment of the ancient race—the O'Donnells, the O'Flahertys, and the O'Briens—her desire was to show the extent and injustice of Catholic disabilities and thus further the cause of Catholic Emancipation.<sup>4</sup> Nor was her purpose unrecognized, and O'Connell once gratefully acknowledged the help which she had given.<sup>5</sup> Nor must Gerald Griffin (1803-40) be omitted, whose fine novel, the *Collegians*, has rarely been equalled for its delineation of Irish character, delineation which was so sympathetic and so true.

<sup>1</sup> See especially *Traits and Stories of the Irish Peasantry*, *Fardarougha the Miser*, *Valentine MacClutchy*, as well as *O'Donoghue's Life*, which latter includes *Carleton's Autobiography*.

<sup>2</sup> *Tales of the O'Hara Family*, 3 vols., London, 1825.

<sup>3</sup> See *Castle Rack-rent*, and the *Absentee* especially; also *The Life and Letters of Maria Edgeworth*, ed. A. J. C. Hare, London, 1894.

<sup>4</sup> Fitzpatrick's *Lady Morgan*, pp. 22-30.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* 253.

Better known than any of the Irish writers of his day, and of more enduring fame, was the poet Thomas Moore (1775-1852). In prose he wrote a *History of Ireland*, which at no time had any special value, and has now become entirely obsolete. He wrote the *Memoirs of Captain Rock*, which throws much light on the state of Ireland in the years immediately preceding Emancipation, and he wrote biographies of Lord Edward Fitzgerald, of Byron, and of Sheridan, the last of which, as a biography, stands deservedly high. But it is as a poet he is best known. He wrote much—songs, ballads, tales, satires, and one noted production, *Lalla Rookh*, in which he describes with much felicity and truth the life of the East with all its glamour and its glow. Not on all these, however, but on his *Irish Melodies* does his fame chiefly rest, and it is with the *Melodies* his name will be for ever associated. Born in Dublin and educated in Trinity College, he was little in touch with the masses of his countrymen. He went early to England and lived and died there, and it was in English drawing-rooms he sang his songs and won applause. And yet he is essentially Irish—his wit, his humour, his pathos, his sympathy with suffering, his hatred of oppression are all Irish. His favourite themes are Irish—some noted event in Irish history, some hero of the centuries that are gone, some beautiful legend, some lake or river or valley, some grey old ruin to which the ivy clings. He is not the poet of passion, but of emotion. He moves to sorrow, to pity, to pride, to vain regret, as he describes the battles that were lost, the hopes that were unfulfilled, the heroism that was unavailing, the plans that came to nought, the treachery that triumphed, the proud defiance which was but the herald of defeat. The words of Moore are often beautiful and are always the expressions of Irish feeling and Irish thought. But it is because the airs to which they are wedded are so touching and plaintive that the *Melodies* appeal so strongly to an Irish heart. They tell the Irishman at home and the Irish exile beyond the sea of sorrow and defeat, and they draw the tear from his eye because they speak to him with the voice of an oppressed land.



The poetry of the Young Irelanders is inferior to that of Moore, for none of them had his peculiar gifts, and Davis, the brightest of them all, was swept away before his talents had matured. Had he lived to old age, and confined himself entirely or even chiefly to literary work, he would probably have done great things both in poetry and in prose. But he would not have shone in the special field in which Moore is supreme. He was no mere drawing-room poet, no sweet singer who excited the emotions of his auditors and won their applause. His object was not to amuse or even to please, but to inform, and in everything he wrote there is evidence of a high purpose and a stern resolve. He refused to contemplate Erin always in tears, always moaning over the past, uttering vain regrets or equally vain threats of defiance. He wanted her to forget that she was in rags and in chains, to cultivate National pride and National self-reliance, to face the future with gathered strength and that confidence which is the forerunner of victory. Hence we find in his songs no note of despair or of depression, but rather those of courage and hope; no lingering on fields of defeat, but rather the defence of Cremona and the charge at Fontenoy. A combination of all Irishmen, a blending of orange and green he knew would be invincible, and therefore he wanted Irishmen of all creeds to cease looking across the Channel, but to look at home and take a pride and an interest in their own land, in its language, its history, its antiquities, its art, its scenery, its music, and above all in its people. His influence over his contemporaries was great, and in the writings of the Young Irelanders the characteristics of Davis appear—his generous toleration towards all Irishmen, his breadth of view, his fervent devotion to Ireland, his scorn of her betrayers, his indignation against those who cast contumely on her name. In this spirit wrote Magee and Duffy, John O'Hagan and D. F. M'Carthy, Barry and Denny Lane, and Mr. Ingram with his noble lyric, "Who fears to speak of '98." D'Alton Williams has a few songs, in every line of which is the crash of battle, and some of Lady Wilde's pieces are a challenge

to Ireland's foes, and on Ireland's betrayers she pours concentrated scorn.<sup>1</sup>

Mangan owed less to Davis than the other writers of the *Nation*, and was less under his influence. He was a strange wayward genius—morbid, melancholic, sensitive, and retiring—with poetic gifts greater than those of Davis himself. Jilted by the only woman he ever loved, he had recourse to opium and alcohol for consolation; but instead of being consoled his misery was intensified. He revelled in what was dismal and desolate, in grief for which earth had no soothing balm, in sorrow too deep-seated to be cured; he walked the streets in tattered garments, his head filled with learning, his heart heavy as lead, his outlook black as night; and he died wasted and worn, leaving behind him, according to a competent critic (Lionel Johnston), something "greater than anything that Ireland has yet produced in English verse."<sup>2</sup>

There is some truth in the judgment passed on the Young Irelanders: that they were not poets, but inspired journalists.<sup>3</sup> They wrote for the day, often to influence the public opinion of the passing hour, and had not time for that study and thought and care essential for literary work which is to live. Yet they were much more than the ordinary journalists, and some at least of what Mangan and Davis wrote deserves a permanent place in literature. What the others could do appeared more fully in after years. In Magee's *History of Ireland* the author gave evidence of possessing the historic sense, and writes readably and impartially. Mitchel had greater literary capacity, but his *History*, and indeed everything he wrote, is disfigured by prejudice and partiality, by a want of calmness in his judgments, by a fierce hatred of England. Neither Father Meehan nor Mr. J. C. O'Callaghan wrote eloquently, but both were fine historical scholars and men of

<sup>1</sup> *The Spirit of the Nation*; D'Alton William's *Poems*; *Poems of Speranza* (Lady Wilde); D. F. M'Carthy's *Book of Irish Ballads*, Dublin, 1846; Duffy's *Young Ireland*.

<sup>2</sup> O'Donoghue's edition of Mangan's *Works*.

<sup>3</sup> Gwyn's *To-day and To-morrow in Ireland*, p. 93.



extensive learning, and what they wrote is invaluable to every student of Irish history.<sup>1</sup> Gavan Duffy has written much, covering, indeed, the whole of his long public life, and what he has written no historian of Ireland can disregard. He is perhaps somewhat unduly partial to his colleagues of the Young Ireland Party, and betrays a tendency to magnify their achievements. But on the whole he writes as an honest and fair-minded man, with much of the calmness of the historian and the grace of one with marked literary tastes—as a man having an extensive knowledge both of books and men. Mr. D. O. Madden was one of Davis's special friends, and has left us pictures of the men of his time equal at least to the lively sketches of the younger Curran,<sup>2</sup> though inferior to the finished pictures of Sheil. He is not, however, impartial or unprejudiced, and is entirely out of sympathy with the political principles and public conduct of O'Connell, though he does justice to his extraordinary powers.<sup>3</sup>

On his side O'Connell viewed with little sympathy all this intellectual activity. He could speak the Irish language fluently, but had no desire to have it preserved and no anxiety to see it used generally by the people. He knew little of Irish history and less about Irish antiquities, nor was he a man of extensive reading. He was a great political leader, a lawyer of unrivalled skill, a Parliamentary debater of the first rank, a man whose public services had so enthroned him in the hearts of the people that he wielded over them nothing less than despotic power. Long accustomed to deference and even servility, he resented the independent tone of the Young Irelanders, for he would have them his followers but not his critics. He had, besides, been badly treated by Irish literary men. Moore had no love for him; Maginn was Irish, but wrote with contempt of O'Connell and repeal; and Mahony, following in the wake of Maginn, had his pages strewn with sneers at the great Irishman who had done so much for

<sup>1</sup> See O'Callaghan's *The Irish Brigade*, *The Green Book*, and his valuable notes to *Macariae Excidium*.

<sup>2</sup> W. H. Curran's *Sketches of the Irish Bar*.

<sup>3</sup> *Ireland and its Rulers*.

Ireland. Carleton had unbounded admiration for O'Connell personally, but abhorred his policy of repeal.<sup>1</sup> As for men like Maxwell and Lefanu and Lever, they could not be expected to be friendly, as they were on the side of his political opponents.<sup>2</sup> For these reasons O'Connell did not share the enthusiasm of Davis for Irish history and Irish biography. If he had done so, the Irish literary revival which had taken place would have made much greater progress; and, no doubt, with the strengthening of the National character thus effected, with the increased dignity and self-reliance called into existence, an industrial revival also would have come.

All hope of any such revival was destroyed by the awful events which followed the deaths of Davis and O'Connell. Davis died in 1845, and O'Connell in 1847; the famine swept away a fourth of the people; the abortive insurrection of 1848 created depression and gloom such as had not been seen since 1798; the landlords grew insolent and evicted, and within a few years the whole country was dotted over with deserted villages and ruined homes. Industries still further decayed, poverty increased, and public spirit declined. With the Young Irelanders dead or in exile, or recreant to their former opinions, National literature might be regarded as dead. Carleton wrote no more novels like *Valentine M'Clutchy*, nor Lefanu any like his *Cock and Anchor*. Lover (1797-1868) published some sweet songs, plaintive and sad, but his two best known novels, *Rory O'More* and *Handy Andy*, continued to be extensively read, and in Great Britain and America were regarded as faithful pictures of Irish life, though in reality they were mischievous caricatures. Lever (1806-72) sinned grievously in the same direction. Reckless, extravagant, nomadic in his habits, he was much abroad and wrote much of foreign persons and foreign scenes. Exaggeration is natural to him, and when he describes men and things in his own country he goes far. His landlords and officers are as extravagant and as convivial as himself—gambling, horse-racing, whiskey-drinking duellists. His priests, without

<sup>1</sup> *Carleton's Life*, ii. 275.

<sup>2</sup> Duffy's *Davis*, pp. 141, 282.



piety or learning, or any serious conception of their duties, are given over to superstition and gluttony. His peasantry, clothed in rags and tatters, are only slaves and buffoons.<sup>1</sup> Far different is the kindly and sympathetic treatment of priest and peasant in the two fine novels of Kictham, *Knocknagow* and *Sally Cavanagh*; and it is regrettable that for many years no other such novels appeared.

In Irish history and antiquities the field is not so barren, and under the auspices of the Celtic, Archæological, and Ossianic Societies much valuable editing was done by O'Donovan and Reeves, by O'Callaghan and Hardiman, by Dr. Todd of Trinity College, and Dr. Kelly of Maynooth. It is to O'Donovan (1809-61) we owe the monumental and masterly edition of the *Four Masters*, as we owe at an earlier date to George Petrie (1789-1866) the valuable contributions on the *Round Towers* and on the *Ancient Architecture of Ireland*. Petrie had indeed every necessary qualification for the task he undertook—knowledge, zeal, judgment, the patience and industry and care of a thorough and impartial investigator. As for O'Donovan, to a sound knowledge of the Irish language he added an extensive acquaintance with all the details of Irish history, and a familiarity with Irish historical topography which has never been equalled. O'Curry (1796-1862) was the greatest Celtic scholar of his day, a man whose modesty prevented him from passing dogmatic judgments on Irish historical events, but who was unwearied in getting together historical material, so that others more competent might judge. Hardiman (1800-55) and John D'Alton (1792-1867) were specially skilled in local history, and are always accurate and reliable; Lord Dunraven's domain was Irish architecture; Sir William Wilde (1815-76) was an antiquarian, but in no sense a historian; Mr. Prendergast's activity was confined to the seventeenth century, and in this period he has done original and invaluable work; and O'Callaghan, Todd, Reeves, and Dr. Kelly were at their best in translating and annotating the historical work of others. More

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* Fitzpatrick's *Life of Charles Lover*, 2 vols., London, 1819, and Bayle Bernard's *Life of Lover*, 2 vols., London, 1874.

versatile than any of these was Sir Samuel Ferguson (1810-86). As a lawyer he attained to eminence in his profession. As Deputy-Keeper of the Irish Records, he showed that his had been an admirable selection, and that none more competent for the office could have been found.<sup>1</sup> He was President of the Royal Irish Academy. He was an antiquarian who carefully groped his way through the buried past, and then wrote learnedly on mounds and raths and Ogham writing, on cromlechs and pillar stones.<sup>2</sup> But it is as a poet he wished to acquire fame, and it is as a poet he has acquired it. He was not in sympathy with the Young Irelanders, though he numbered several of them among his close personal friends.<sup>3</sup> His gifts recalled those of D'Arcy Magee, for both knew much of their country's story, and it is over the broad field of Irish history and Irish legend that Ferguson loved to roam. His elegy on Davis was "the most Celtic in structure and spirit" of all those laid on the dead patriot's tomb.<sup>4</sup> He wrote satire in felicitous verse. He wrote lyrics, which, though in English, are Irish in spirit and in form. He wrote bardic tales with the genius and sympathy of an ancient bard. And as he wandered back through the ages, he lighted upon some legendary or historic event which he lifted to epic dignity. His ambition was to raise the native elements of Irish story to a dignified level;<sup>5</sup> and no one who reads what he has written will be disposed to say that he has failed.

During the last quarter of the century the most fruitful workers in the domain of Irish history and archæology were Cardinal Moran, Dr. Healy, Archbishop of Tuam; Father Murphy and Dr. M'Carthy, Dr. Joyce and Standish H. O'Grady, Gilbert and Fitzpatrick, Richey, and Bagwell, and Lecky; and in poetry Ferguson found no unworthy successors in Allingham (1824-89) and Aubrey de Vere. Like him both drew much of their inspiration from Ireland, and like him both were familiar with its story and its scenery, its legends and its lore.<sup>6</sup> With considerable aptitude for historical research,

<sup>1</sup> Lady Ferguson's *Sir S. Ferguson*, ii. 332-7.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 46-47.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* i. 139.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* 134-6.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* 36.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* 251-2.



Cardinal Moran has gone over the whole field of Irish Church history, producing many books with which no Irish historian can dispense. Dr. Healy is as familiar as the Cardinal with the sources of Irish history, ecclesiastical and civil, and an equally enthusiastic historical student, and he is a more eloquent and attractive writer. With a knowledge of ancient Irish architecture, which is profound, and a genius for historical topography little inferior to that of O'Donovan, he has visited every district in Ireland, and therefore describes what he has seen; and his vivid pictures of Arran and Armagh, of Bangor and Clonmacnoise, have not been and are not likely to be surpassed. Father Murphy and Dr. MacCarthy are best as editors. Mr. S. H. O'Grady has been declared by a competent critic to approach nearest to O'Donovan.<sup>1</sup> Dr Joyce has to his account a good deal of Irish history impartially told, and his book on the social condition of ancient Ireland has popularized and extended the materials left us by O'Curry. As for Whitley Stokes, his reputation as a profound scholar is world-wide, and in the field of Celtic philology he stands unequalled. Gilbert delighted to make his way through State documents, to discover what had hitherto lain concealed, to arrange and piece together historical fragments, and then set forth lucidly what he had done, so that the historian might weave a connected narrative. Fitzpatrick equally loved research, but it was chiefly into the lives and characters of public men, and not infrequently his discoveries have proved of great historical value. Richey and Bagwell have written from the landlord and conservative standpoint, but both are painstaking and are never consciously unfair. Lecky stands on a higher level, and is one of the greatest historians of the age; fair-minded and full, his aim to discover the truth, he is unwearied in its pursuit, pronounces his judgments with judicial impartiality, writes often in a strain of lofty eloquence, and is never wearisome or dull, and has left us *A History of Ireland in the Eighteenth Century* which for the period covered stands unrivalled.

For some years before his death O'Curry had been

<sup>1</sup> Lady Ferguson, ii. 88.

Professor of Irish History and Archæology in the Catholic University. That institution owed its origin to the Catholic bishops. Trinity College was Protestant, the Queen's Colleges were godless colleges, and Dr. MacHale and many of his colleagues suggested, as the only way of meeting Catholic requirements, the establishment of a University under Catholic control, relying on Catholic support, with Catholic students in its class halls and Catholic professors in the various chairs. As far back as 1847 the Congregation of the Propaganda had urged the Irish bishops to aim at setting up a Catholic University, giving them as a model the University of Louvain.<sup>1</sup> Dr. MacHale, and those who like him had opposed the Queen's Colleges, welcomed the suggestion and were ready to act on it; and at the Synod of Thurles in 1850 the Queen's Colleges, having been formally condemned as intrinsically dangerous to faith and morals, it was resolved that every effort should be made to meet the views of the Propaganda by the establishment of a Catholic University.<sup>2</sup> Some time elapsed before the necessary brief was obtained from Rome and the necessary funds in Ireland, and not until 1853 did the Catholic University open its doors. Its site was in St. Stephen's Green, Dublin, its first Rector, John Henry Newman. Professors to the different chairs were soon after appointed, and work was commenced in the following year.

But there were difficulties from the beginning which boded ill for the new institution, and gave no promise of that success which has followed the fortunes of the great establishment at Louvain. Between Dr. MacHale and Dr. Cullen serious differences arose. The latter wanted the affairs of the University to be managed by a small committee of the bishops, while Dr. MacHale wanted the control to be in the hands of the whole Episcopal body. And Dr. MacHale complained of the appointments made to the various chairs, and of not being furnished with details of the expenditure. Finally he disapproved of the appointment of Dr. Newman. He did not

<sup>1</sup> *Decrees of the Synod of Thurles*, Appendix iv.

<sup>2</sup> *Decrees of the Synod* (Chapter, "De Colegiis Reginae").



deny that the great oratorian had intellectual capacity of the highest order and that his moral character was above reproach, and he knew that having lived so long in Oxford he was familiar with the life and spirit of a great University. But though Newman loved Ireland, and especially because of her noble fidelity to the ancient faith, he was an Englishman with English ideas. Dr. MacHale wanted an Irishman with Irish ideas. He wanted to have the University develop on Irish lines ; to have the whole atmosphere of the place distinctively Irish ; to have the Irish language efficiently taught, and Irish history a prominent place in the curriculum ; to have Irish song and story made familiar, Irish art cultivated, and Irish heroes venerated within its walls. Thus, by professors Irish in sympathy and in feeling, students would be trained and sent forth who would exhibit the highest capabilities of the Irish character, and by whom the best traditions of their race would be rivalled and recalled.<sup>1</sup> With much of this Newman had no sympathy. Among his list of nominations to the professors' chairs were several educated at Oxford and Cambridge. He had no provision made for the teaching of the Irish language. And instead of having an Irish National University, he preferred one which would be rather cosmopolitan in its character—a centre in which all subjects would be taught to seekers after knowledge no matter whence they came. Dr. Cullen favoured Newman's views, and the want of harmony between two such eminent ecclesiastics as Dr. Cullen and Dr. MacHale resulted in lessened enthusiasm for the University on the part of the public, and consequent lessened pecuniary support. The professorial staff was incomplete ; there was no provision made for the students' residence or for tutorial superintendence, and there could not, therefore, be that inter-communion of thought so necessary to University life. The obstinate refusal of the Government to grant a charter was the heaviest blow of all. Unable any longer to row against the stream Newman resigned in 1857. After that date the University struggled painfully on until in 1882 it was handed

<sup>1</sup> O'Reilly's *Life of MacHale*, i. 487-525.

over to the Jesuits, and by them was galvanized into activity. The conscientious Catholics meanwhile were shut out from higher education. Those who were less conscientious went to the Queen's Colleges in spite of Episcopal prohibition, and not a few also made their way to Trinity College

The latter institution in 1893 celebrated its tercentenary. For four days the celebrations continued. As many as seventy-five Universities and other learned bodies were represented, and students and learned men came from many lands. There were balls and banquets and garden parties; there was a religious celebration in St. Patrick's Cathedral, attended by the guests in their many-coloured academic costumes; there was a tercentenary ode and the conferring of honorary degrees; and in many speeches the past glories of Trinity College were recalled.<sup>1</sup> And, undoubtedly, the list of great men who had passed through its halls since the days of Usher and Ware was a long one. It could claim Molyneux and Swift and Goldsmith. The great men who shed lustre on Ireland in the closing years of the eighteenth century were among its students—Grattan and Flood, and Plunkett and Bushe, and Curran and many more. O'Connell did not belong to it, but Sheil and Moore did, as did Davis and Ferguson; and among its professors were Ingram and Isaac Butt. And if we enumerate all those who won distinction in the Church, at the Bar, in the army and navy and diplomatic services, the list might be indefinitely prolonged.<sup>2</sup> These men, however, served England and her empire, and had little sympathy with Ireland, and hence from the tercentenary celebrations the masses and their representatives held aloof. For Trinity College in the nineteenth century, as in the sixteenth, was a Protestant institution in a Catholic land, an enemy of popular progress, a citadel of ascendancy and class privilege; and if Wolfe Tone and Emmett and Davis had been among its students, they found but few sympathizers within its walls. It had given no help to O'Connell; and in the subsequent contests, in the struggle

<sup>1</sup> MacNeill Dixon, *History of Trinity College*, pp. 282-4.

<sup>2</sup> Dixon's *Introduction*.



for Parliamentary and municipal reform, in the fight for educational equality, and in the long fierce agrarian struggle, the voice of Trinity College had always been lifted up to drown the voice of freedom. Irish Catholics remembered with bitterness that this rich institution with its splendid buildings, its magnificent library, its complete University equipment, had always been aggressively Protestant, though it derived its princely revenue from the plunder of Catholic lands. And Irish Nationalists remembered with bitterness that the Parliamentary representatives of Trinity College had always been place-hunting lawyers ; that its students had always been ready to groan a popular procession or cheer an unpopular Viceroy. And in the great Home Rule struggle one of its professors, Dr. Ingram, had the hardihood to enter the lists against Mr. Gladstone, and had undertaken the impossible task of justifying the vile manner by which the Union had been passed. And yet Irishmen, who would lay aside religious and political prejudices, and regard only academic attainments, could not but admit that Trinity College reflected honour on Ireland. If it had done little in the field of original research, and if the number of its really great men was small in proportion to the number of its students and the amount of its revenues, at least there was no age in which some great men did not belong to it. Usher and Berkeley, Swift and Burke, were intellectual giants, men whose fame was of all time ; and if in 1893 it was true that Trinity College could boast of none such as these, it was equally true that Mahaffy and Salmon, and Dowden and Lecky, were men who would have brought honour to the first University in the world.

Two years after this date came the centenary of Maynooth College. The Pope sent an autograph letter of congratulation, and among the visitors were archbishops and bishops from all parts of Ireland, as well as from England and from abroad, the heads of many foreign colleges, and many hundreds of priests. The balls and banquets and garden parties, the ladies' dresses and the many-coloured academic costumes which were seen at Trinity College were not at Maynooth,

for Maynooth is not a University but a great ecclesiastical seminary. But there were meetings and speeches and religious celebrations, and an eloquent sermon by a former Maynooth student, Dr. Healy of Clonfert, and besides these public functions there were many hearty greetings between former comrades, who clasped hands once more after the lapse of years. Many a priest who had long wrestled with the world and its cares was glad to see again the familiar face of his Alma Mater, its fields and walks and grey old walls, the cloisters in which he had walked so often, the class-hall in which he had sat, the room he once occupied. And he sighed as he realized the havoc which had been wrought by time, the old Professors and Superiors gone, his fellow-students scattered far and wide, some working in holy Ireland itself and some in far-off lands, and not a few of the dear old friends whom he had loved silent for ever in their graves.

Within the walls of Maynooth there has always been plenty of talent, and yet the number of Maynooth men who have become authors is but small. Busily engaged at class work, the Professors have little leisure for literary work, and when they have written it is on purely professional subjects. The Irish Bishops have often more leisure, but few of them have had literary tastes. And the priests throughout the country who may have time and literary tastes have almost insuperable difficulties to surmount. The Irish publishers have little initiative or enterprise, and the priest in some obscure country village knows nothing of London publishers, and not infrequently also at home he has to encounter discouragement. But if he does not write books he buys them, and there is no movement for the uplifting of the people—literary, artistic, industrial—in which he does not share. The priests helped O'Connell in the struggle for Emancipation and in the struggle for the Repeal. They were in the ranks of Young Ireland and shared its enthusiasm for Irish National ideals, and in the Gaelic movement of later times no class of Irishmen have taken so prominent a part.

In 1843 there were 3,000,000 persons in Ireland still



speaking Irish as their mother-tongue.<sup>1</sup> By famine and emigration their ranks in the next few years were woefully thinned. On the altar steps and in the homes of the people Irish gradually grew into disuse, and in the National schools children were punished for speaking it. Alone among the Catholic Bishops Dr. MacHale laboured for its preservation, had it taught in the Primary Schools of his Diocese and in his Diocesan College, and compelled all his priests to learn it at Maynooth and use it in speaking to the people. No organized effort was made till 1876, when the Society for the Preservation of the Irish Language was founded. But this Society, confining itself to publishing some small text-books, never attained national proportions, and in 1879 a more virile one was formed, the Gaelic Union, which in a short time started the *Gaelic Journal*. The years that followed were years of fierce political struggle, which absorbed the best energies of the Irish race in every land. Amid the din and stress of battle no mere literary movement could have aroused national enthusiasm, and only after the fall of Parnell was a beginning made by the establishment in 1893 of the Gaelic League. It owed its origin to the more militant spirits of the Gaelic Union, mostly young men, and differing much both in politics and in creed.

At that date the best known among them was Father Eugene O'Growney, a man of singularly lovable character. Modest, unassuming, and retiring, he was without a trace of vanity or self-conceit. Ill-natured critics, jealous no doubt of his well-earned fame, have sometimes pointed to the fact that in Maynooth his academic honours were few. But they forgot that even Burke and Swift had the same story to tell; that to obtain such honours requires the constant treading and retreading the same narrow patch of ground,<sup>2</sup> and to many this is an unendurable weariness; and they ignore the fact that O'Growney's health in College had always been poor, and study and sickness go ill together. Besides this, his enthusiasm for Irish was such that he left himself little time for other studies. Born in Meath, where it was little spoken, he knew

<sup>1</sup> Kohl's *Tour*, p. 207.

<sup>2</sup> Morley's *Edmund Burke*.

nothing of it till he entered College, and there he took up its study and laboured with unwearied industry. He loved to frequent the College Library and copy its Irish manuscripts, and to discuss with Irish-speaking students questions of pronunciation and dialect ; and when the vacation came he went to Kerry and Cork, and Donegal and the Arran Isles, to learn the language where it was pure. His great ability soon made him proficient, and while yet a student he wrote Irish tales and stories and translations for the *Gaelic Journal*. In 1889 he became Professor of Irish at Maynooth, and inspired many of his students with some of his own enthusiasm. A delicate constitution could not stand the strain of all his work, and he was compelled to seek health and strength beneath summer skies. He died at Los Angeles in 1894, away on the distant slopes of the Pacific, and as his body was borne back to Ireland across the American continent the whole Irish race came out to do him honour. His simplicity, his earnestness, his enthusiasm had attracted the esteem and affection of millions ; and those who, like the present writer, were numbered among his intimate friends feel the better for having known such a man, and will always cherish his memory.

The work which he had so much at heart was carried on in his declining years, as it has been since, by his colleagues of the Gaelic League, and notably by its President, Dr. Douglas Hyde. Though a Protestant and educated at Trinity College, Dr. Hyde is thoroughly imbued with the Irish national spirit. He is a man of considerable ability, with a special aptitude for languages, and has done much propagandist work. He has travelled through all parts of Ireland, talked the old language with the people, and taken from their lips old stories and songs, and has thus been able to write much on Irish legends and folk-lore. Less prominent but scarcely less enthusiastic in the movement have been Mr. MacNeill, Father Dineen, and Dr. O'Hickey, Father John O'Reilly, and several others. They set before themselves the task of restoring to Ireland her rightful heritage from the past in language, in story, in legend, in music, and in song ; and when it is



remembered how far the process of Anglicization had gone, it was a task from which even Hercules might have recoiled. The Irish language had indeed fallen low. The landed gentry despised it, the professional classes and the merchants in towns were all unfriendly to it, the priest ceased to use it in his sermons, and the schoolmaster shunned it in the school; and when the peasant spoke it, it was to the donkey he belaboured on the roadside or to the cattle he drove through the fields. It was English poetry which was admired, English novels and English newspapers which were read, English dress which was worn, and English fashions copied. The names of Patrick and Bridget, and Brendan and Columba, had given place to George and Arthur, and Mabel and Maud. Irish history was tabooed as a series of faction fights. The country fiddler and piper were no longer heard, and the cross-road dance no longer seen. And the change had not benefited Ireland. Her manufactures had decayed, energy, and enterprise and initiative had become less, national dignity and self-respect were but empty names, and Irish rural life had become so dull that thousands were every year flying to foreign lands.

In 1901 there were but 21,000 persons in Ireland who spoke Irish only. The Gaelic Leaguers did not want to have all Irishmen such as these, for they wanted English to be retained for the country's material needs. It would be madness to discard so great a language—the language of a world-wide Empire. But they wanted the Irish people to be a bilingual people, to speak their own old tongue, to dance Irish jigs and reels, to cultivate Irish music and encourage Irish art, to study their history with all its lights and shades. They were encouraged by what they had seen done by Greeks and Slavs, and Poles and Magyars, and Welsh, and they believed that what these had done to revive their language and distinctive national characteristics could be done in Ireland.<sup>1</sup> As usual, Trinity College was on the anti-National side. Dr. Mahaffy thought that to revive the Irish language would be a retrograde step—a return to the Tower of Babel. His colleague, Professor

<sup>1</sup> Dubois, p. 437.

Atkinson, declared that Irish was not good enough for a patois ; and neither in the Primary nor Intermediate system of education was Irish given any substantial encouragement.<sup>1</sup> The shoneens everywhere, that is, the Irishmen who ape England and its ways, predicted failure—for everything Irish was sure to fail. Many others, while indulging in loud talk against England, would do nothing but pass resolutions. And the number of the apathetic was legion.

But Dr. Hyde and his colleagues struggled on, and with a patience, an energy, a determination to succeed not usually associated with Irishmen. Success at last came. In 1906 there were nearly 100,000 children learning Irish in the National Schools, and nearly 3000 presented themselves for examination in that subject at the Intermediate examinations of the preceding year. By that time Irish and Irish history could be taught in the National Schools within school hours, a concession very difficult to obtain.<sup>2</sup> There were nearly 1000 branches of the Gaelic League ; there were Gaelic festivals where Irish stories were told, Irish jigs and reels danced, and Irish songs sung, and there was the yearly National Festival (the Ardh-Fheis), where these things were done on a national scale. Irish concerts were often organized, Irish lectures given, and there was an Irish newspaper, the *Claideamh Solius*, the recognized organ of the Gaelic Leaguers. Wisely avoiding politics, the Gaelic League has attracted men of various classes and creeds—priests, parsons, lawyers, doctors, journalists, members of Parliament. Dr. Hyde himself is a Protestant, Mr. Stephen Gwynn, M.P., author and poet, is also a Protestant, Lord Castletown is a peer of the realm, Mr. Gibson is heir to Lord Ashbourne, Rev. Mr. Hannay is a literary parson in the west of Ireland, Colonel Moore a distinguished army officer. In America the Gaelic League has many branches, and when in recent years Dr. Hyde went to America he brought home with him after a short lecturing tour the sum of £10,000 for the spread of the organization at home. Subscriptions have come from Australia and from the Argentine

<sup>1</sup> Dubois, pp. 414-17.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 417-19.



Republic, and in London an Irish Texts Society has been formed. Under its auspices a Dictionary has been brought out by Father Dineen, and Irish texts have been edited by capable Irish scholars. For works written in Irish the time is not yet ripe, and though many smaller works have been published, some of which have met with a ready sale, as yet no original Irish book of permanent value has appeared.

In English, however, there has been a literary revival largely due to the spirit evoked by the Gaelic movement. In Dublin there is a National Literary Society at which papers are read on national subjects. In London there is a similar Society, under the auspices of which some valuable monographs have been published on such men as Davis, Sarsfield, Owen Roe O'Neill, and Dr. Doyle. Mr. Graves, himself a poet, has brought out an Irish song-book ; Mr. Standish O'Grady has written historical fiction dealing with Elizabethan times, and Dr. Hyde has told the story of early Gaelic literature. Besides his book on Dr. Doyle, Mr. Michael MacDonagh has dealt with O'Connell.<sup>1</sup> Mr. D. J. O'Donoghue has done much in the field of literary biography, and Mr. Larminie has dealt with West of Ireland folk-lore. Ethna Carbery and Moira O'Neill are both sweet singers from Ulster. T. D. Sullivan is responsible for some lyrics which have won world-wide fame. Dr. Sheehan deals with the Irish priest's life and in that field is supreme. Miss Lawless is Anglo-Irish rather than Irish ; Miss Barlow is happy in describing the Irish peasantry ; and Lady Gregory's attachment is for Pagan Ireland. She has also had a large share in establishing an Irish Literary Theatre, in which several plays written by Lady Gregory herself and some of her literary friends have been produced. But neither of these plays has any striking merit, and so far nothing great has been done on the stage. Mr. George Russell has not written plays, but is a poet of undoubted gifts. He is not easily understood, and is more of a mystic than any of his contemporaries. Without caring to describe the scenery of his country or its ruins, or to grow enthusiastic about the great

<sup>1</sup> See also his *Viceroy's Post-Bag*.

events of its history, yet he is Irish to the core. Vague, indefinite, idealistic, he is pantheistic in his philosophy and pagan in his belief, one to whom Pagan Ireland rather than Christian Ireland appeals.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Yeates, however, is the most famous of the group, the high-priest of the Irish Literary Theatre. He has written plays and poems and a little prose, and often expresses beautiful thoughts in beautiful language. Vague and dreamy, he has gone to Irish pagan mythology for his themes, to the fairy palace and the enchanted castle, to the goddesses and legendary heroes, to Maebh and Oisín and Cúchullain. He is not a Christian, apparently, and has declared that the Christian's code of morals is not for him; and he cares little for the concrete parts of Irish history. To the solid earth on which he stands, to the sights and scenes around him, he prefers the palace of the fairy and the land of the ever young, and not infrequently he is so misty and indefinite that he eludes the ordinary intelligence.<sup>2</sup> He has his admirers, and they are not few, but he can never become a national poet, nor be the head of a great literary movement; for the people are not likely to accept as a leader or as a literary prophet one who lives for ever with fairies and dreams, and who clings to a philosophy and a religion (if they can be called such) which he himself is unable to explain.<sup>3</sup>

It has been observed by M. Dubois<sup>4</sup> that there is no case in European history in which a national renaissance has not been accompanied or followed by an economic one, and when the Gaelic movement began such an economic renaissance was badly required in Ireland. Half a century after Kane had written of its mineral wealth and industrial possibilities<sup>5</sup> the coalfields of Armagh and Tyrone, and the copper and lead deposits of Wicklow, Wexford, and Waterford, were still undeveloped. The coal-mines at Castlecomer and the iron mines at Arigna suffered from inadequate transport facilities. Irish

<sup>1</sup> *To-day and To-morrow in Ireland*, pp. 29-30.

<sup>2</sup> *Irish Ideals*, pp. 94, 99, 101.

<sup>3</sup> *North American Review*, October 1902, article by Fiona MacLeod.

<sup>4</sup> *Contemporary Ireland*, p. 404.

<sup>5</sup> See Kane's *Industrial Resources of Ireland*.



peat was used only for fuel. Irish fisheries yielded wealth to Frenchmen and Manxmen, but not to Irishmen. The waters of so many noble rivers, each capable of generating enormous electric power and of turning a thousand mill-wheels, rushed idly to the sea. In Ulster, indeed, the linen manufacture flourished, Dublin contained the greatest brewery in the world, at Dublin and Cork were thriving distilleries, and at Belfast were enormous and prosperous shipbuilding yards; but these stood out like so many oases in the dreary desert of industrial decay. As for agriculture, it had not passed beyond primitive conditions, and in consequence the soil did not give half the yield which it might give. Newspapers and public men complained that British capital was not directed towards Ireland, ignoring the fact that millions of Irish money were invested abroad and millions more lying unproductive in the Savings Banks at home.

By co-operation and self-help, by improved methods of tillage and improved breeds of stock, by imparting better technical training, and by a more careful study of the requirements of the markets at home and abroad, much has been done by the Agricultural Department and by the Congested Board. The land yields more, stock are more marketable, the Irish fisheries have ceased to be monopolized by Manx and French, there has been a distinct revival in the Irish butter, poultry, and egg trade. Homespun is produced along the western seaboard and carpets in Donegal, the woollen manufactures have made progress in Munster, and there is an increasing demand for Irish lace.<sup>1</sup> Not a little of the credit for this revival, partial and incomplete though it be, is due to Sir Horace Plunkett, who deserves well of Ireland. He would, however, have deserved better if he had not attacked the Catholic clergy and their religion. Premising that Catholicity, from its too great reliance on authority, blights initiative and self-reliance, and is unfavourable to the growth of industrial habits, he points to Ulster, Protestant and prosperous, and to the Catholic provinces, poor and unprogressive; he charges the

<sup>1</sup> *Irish Rural Life*, pp. 129, 152-4, 157.

priests with not doing enough to promote temperance and thrift, and he blames them for building expensive churches in the midst of poverty-stricken congregations, and for filling these churches with the meretricious products of foreign art, while they neglect the art which is of native growth.<sup>1</sup> These charges have been effectively answered in a singularly able book by a singularly able man, Dr. O'Riordan, Rector of the Irish College at Rome, a man whose extensive scholarship recalls the days of Wadding and Colgan and Lynch. Dr. O'Riordan shows conclusively that Ulster is not so prosperous as Sir H. Plunkett would have us believe; that Belgium, prosperous and Catholic, refutes the charge that Catholicity is opposed to industrial habits; that Catholics have had to build new churches, having been plundered by Protestants of those they once had. And he shows that the priests were Sir Horace Plunkett's best helpers, and in no schools has so much been done for technical training as in the convent schools.<sup>2</sup>

It was in the pages of the *Dublin Leader* that Dr. O'Riordan's book first appeared in serial form, and to that journal and its genial editor, Mr. Moran, the Irish revival owes much. No one will easily take Mr. Moran for anything but an Irishman. His buoyant spirits, his hearty laugh, his love of a joke, his quick perception of a humorous situation, are as Irish as the Lakes of Killarney or the mountains of Connemara. Knowing the Irish language himself, he wants it studied by Irishmen, and he wants a literary revival, though he has little sympathy with the dreams and fairies of Mr. Yeates. For Mr. Moran is as practical as Thomas Davis, and sees that what Ireland wants most of all is men with confidence in themselves and in their country.<sup>3</sup> He loves not those who blame the Government for everything, and who spend their time passing resolutions but will do nothing themselves; and on the Irishman who apes England and its ways, and despises his own country, he makes unsparing war. In an age of commercial

<sup>1</sup> *Ireland in the New Century*, chap. iv.

<sup>2</sup> *Catholicity and Progress in Ireland*, pp. 14, 42, 208-27, 410-20.

<sup>3</sup> *Irish Ideals*, pp. 38-39.



journalism the paper which would refuse English and only insert Irish advertisements would be regarded as a strange novelty. Yet Mr. Moran has done this, and with the happy result that, while his paper prospers, a valuable and much-needed stimulus has been given to Irish enterprise.

## CHAPTER XXI

### *The Irish Abroad*

THE English made permanent settlements in North America, early in the seventeenth century, at Virginia and at Plymouth, and William Penn established a colony in Pennsylvania in 1682. The Irish, however, were slow to follow where the English led, and not till 1677 was there an Irish Quaker colony at Salem, in New Jersey, and a still larger colony, also Quakers, settled at Philadelphia.<sup>1</sup> Before the century closed an Irish Catholic gentleman named Carroll settled in Maryland. Early in the eighteenth century the stream of Irish emigration flowed westward with great volume, and for many years a yearly average of 3000 Irish, mostly Presbyterians from Ulster, landed on American soil.<sup>2</sup> During that period the Irish Catholics went for the most part to France. Not all, however, for we find in the middle of the eighteenth century that there were M'Duffys, M'Dowells, and M'Grudgers in Virginia, an O'Hara at Pittsburg, and at Burlington no less than 100 Dublin men landed from a single ship.<sup>3</sup> Excessive rents and excessive tithes drove away thousands of Irish, both Catholic and Presbyterian, in the years preceding the War of American Independence, and by that time the Irish had grown numerous, and in many cases wealthy, in the Carolinas, Maryland, Georgia, and Virginia, in the New England States, and even in far-away Kentucky and Tennessee.<sup>4</sup> They were among the most resolute opponents of English tyranny, and when war broke out their valour was conspicuous both on sea and land. They fought at Lexington and Bunker Hill ;

<sup>1</sup> O'Hanlon's *Irish-American History*, pp. 57, 63.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 70.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 82-84, 100-101.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* 104-9, 137-9.



the Irish-American Brigade of Pennsylvania were among the best troops which Washington led ; and on sea Jack Barry was one of England's most dreaded foes.<sup>1</sup> No less than nine of those who signed the Declaration of Independence were Irish or of Irish descent ;<sup>2</sup> at a critical period of the war twenty-three Irishmen subscribed half a million dollars ;<sup>3</sup> and when the war was over to no soldiers was Washington more grateful than to the Irish.<sup>4</sup> In 1771 and 1772 the number of Irish emigrants to America was 17,350, and in one fortnight in the following year it was 3500.<sup>5</sup> They were so numerous at the opening of the war that they completely dominated the State of Pennsylvania, and in 1785 it was given in evidence before a Committee of the British House of Commons that "half of the rebel Continental army were from Ireland."<sup>6</sup>

To a country which owed so much to Irish valour, which imposed no restrictions on account of religion,<sup>7</sup> and in which the rack-renting landlord and the grasping tithe-proctor were unknown, it might have been expected that there would have been a sudden influx of Irish emigrants in the years following the war. But careful research has discovered that for the ten years from 1784 to 1794 the average number of immigrants from all foreign countries was not more than 4000 a year, and necessarily but a portion, and probably a small portion, of these was from Ireland.<sup>8</sup> The reason is not far to seek. These were the years following the removal of the commercial restrictions and the acquisition of legislative independence, the years during which Irish agriculture was prosperous and the Irish manufacturing industry advanced with giant strides ; and Irishmen had no desire to cross the sea as long as there was prosperity at home. Then came the long war with France, during which Irishmen thought it dangerous to cross the ocean in vessels flying the British flag. When the war was

<sup>1</sup> O'Hanlon, pp. 159-60, 168-72, 187-92.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 196-208.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 261.

<sup>4</sup> Maguire's *The Irish in America*, pp. 354-5.

<sup>5</sup> Bagenal's *The American Irish*, p. 6.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* 9, 13.

<sup>7</sup> O'Hanlon, Appendix 3—Constitution of the United States—"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the exercise thereof."

<sup>8</sup> Bagenal, pp. 25-26.

ended amid the smoke of Waterloo, the tide once more began to flow ; and it has been calculated that from 1819 to 1855 nearly two millions left Ireland for the United States. Another estimate is that from 1820 to 1872 the number was three millions. But both figures are obviously too low, and do not sufficiently take count of the number of Irish who left British ports, and are therefore put down as natives of Great Britain.<sup>1</sup>

But besides those who went to the United States, many Irishmen crossed the Atlantic to settle in Quebec, in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, in Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland. In Nova Scotia there is much greater cold in winter and much greater heat in summer than in Ireland ; but the climate is not unhealthy, and in agriculture, in the fisheries, and in the mines many who came from Ireland found wealth. Sobriety, industry, and perseverance enabled them to succeed ; the day-labourer soon became a farmer or prosperous merchant, and in half a century the Irish grew to be a great factor in the life of Nova Scotia. Its capital in 1816 contained but 1500 Catholics, with a few others scattered over the colony, but in 1866 the Catholics of the colony numbered 115,000, of whom no less than 40,000 were Irish.<sup>2</sup> The Irish were then a majority of the inhabitants of Halifax, owning some of its largest shops ; and of the 2000 Irish voters in the city all or nearly all owned £50 of real estate.<sup>3</sup> In Prince Edward Island a somewhat similar state of things prevailed. Industry, sobriety, and thrift had there also enabled the Irish day-labourer to acquire some of the rich land, and so to acquire not only a competency, but sometimes wealth. Mr. Maguire found an Irishman, the Hon. D. Brennan, one of the shrewdest and ablest of the island merchants ; and in an Irish settlement which he visited he found men who had come without a sixpence in possession of good-sized, well-tilled, well-stocked farms, comfortable houses, and every evidence of prosperity. As for the Irish girls, he gives the testimony of a Scotch Bishop, that there "could not be a more modest, chaste, and well-conducted class ; a case of scandal is of the very rarest

<sup>1</sup> Bagenal, pp. 26-29.

<sup>2</sup> Maguire, pp. 11-12.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 3-5, 20.



occurrence among them."<sup>1</sup> In St. John, the capital of New Brunswick, the Irish in 1866 owned fully half the property and wealth.<sup>2</sup> In 1874 the Catholics of Newfoundland numbered a third of the entire population of the colony, all descendants of Irish emigrants, and in 1901 the proportion was still maintained.<sup>3</sup> Nor had the Irish been less successful along the St. Lawrence. In 1866 the Irish Catholic working men in Quebec had £80,000 lodged in the Savings Bank, and there were cases where individual Irishmen had made fortunes of £50,000, though they had come out without a shilling.<sup>4</sup> Nor were there less than 30,000 Irish Catholics in the city of Montreal.<sup>5</sup>

In the terrible exodus of the famine years Irish emigrants did not go to Newfoundland, and few of these went to Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, or Prince Edward Island. But hundreds of thousands directed their course to Canada, and of these the fate was sad in the extreme. Borne in sailing vessels—old, unseaworthy, and slow—the ten or twelve weeks of the voyage was a time of horror. Flying from hunger, they had an insufficient supply of food on board; flying from fever, they had typhus among the passengers and were soon stricken down themselves; and without medicine, nursing, or medical attendance, sickness was but the prelude to death, followed by burial at sea. From stem to stern of the vessel pestilence was lord of all, and night and day the sounds that met the ear were the incoherent mutterings of the delirious, the faint moans of the dying, and the pitiful wailing for the dead. Deaths were necessarily frequent, and the cases were not a few where a family of twelve left Ireland and only one reached the end of his journey. And when the mouth of the St. Lawrence was reached there was a fresh catalogue of horrors. Fearful of admitting typhus-stricken patients, the Canadian Government had made Grosse Isle a quarantine station, and there all vessels were examined and all still in fever detained. But the accommodation provided was altogether insufficient, and the

<sup>1</sup> Maguire, pp. 32-33, 45.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 77.

<sup>3</sup> *Encyclopædia Britannica.*

<sup>4</sup> Maguire, p. 93.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* 97.

rude fever-sheds were soon filled to overflowing. Inside were patients in delirium, outside in the open were men and women lying half-naked and helpless, with none to give them food or drink. The daily death-roll was at least 100, and often reached to twice that amount. In Grosse Isle alone as many as ten thousand, or perhaps twelve thousand, were buried, nearly half of these being unknown ;<sup>1</sup> and along the St. Lawrence the horrors of Grosse Isle were renewed. At Quebec as many as 1100 were lying at the same time in the fever-sheds, and within one small railed-in area 600 Irish emigrants were interred. At Kingston the deaths were so many that coffins could not be supplied, and in one large pit 1900 uncoffined Irish were laid.<sup>2</sup> The priests who ministered, the nuns who nursed were struck down ; often whole families were swept away, and sometimes father and mother died leaving helpless children too young to understand their loss. The Irish already in Canada helped some of these orphans ; others were adopted by Protestants and brought up as such ; and many were cared for by French Canadians.<sup>3</sup> In the year that followed other Irish came, happily without having to enter the fever-sheds or the nameless graves. In every walk of life they prospered—as farmers and traders, as lawyers, doctors, and engineers ; and in the higher offices of State more than one Irishman held office as Minister of the Crown.

But the greater number of the Irish who traversed the Atlantic made their way to the United States. Like those who entered the St. Lawrence, they travelled in fever-stricken vessels, and when cast ashore at New York became inmates of fever hospitals. On the voyage they had breathed a pestilential atmosphere, and had seen sickness and death around them ; and many a blushing and beautiful Irish girl, hitherto stainless as the lily, had been assailed in mid-ocean by some sailor or ship's officer and had become a victim to his lawless lust.<sup>4</sup> What those who entered the fever hospitals suffered may be gathered from the fact that in one room but 50 feet square there were found 100 persons sick and dying,

<sup>1</sup> Maguire, pp. 134-8.    <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 149-53.    <sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 144, 150.    <sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* 180-4.



among them being the bodies of two who had died five days previously and since then had been left unburied.<sup>1</sup> Nor were the troubles of those who braved the fever on shipboard or on land over when they landed safely and in health on American soil. In the streets of the city they were set upon and robbed; they were overcharged by dishonest lodging-house keepers; they were sold bogus tickets by fraudulent agents of bankrupt passenger companies; and not infrequently the innocent girl was enticed into the abodes of the fallen to lead a life of dishonour.<sup>2</sup> At length, in 1855, an official landing-place was established at New York, and there all vessels discharged their passengers; and all passengers had expert advice to aid them in getting safely to their destination.<sup>3</sup>

Mr. Maguire laments that so many of the Irish clung to the cities instead of going west, where land could have been easily acquired. In some cases no doubt they had not the means to go west. In many cases when they had they preferred the society of the towns, the public-house, the theatre, the political meeting, to the loneliness of rural life. They lived amid surroundings which to them were new and strange, and little in keeping with the life they had previously led. For they lived in the tenement houses of New York, in basements and cellars, in rooms ill-lighted, ill-ventilated, and cold, where typhus, measles, consumption, and other deadly diseases had become chronic, and where infantile mortality had reached such alarming proportions that tens of thousands were yearly swept away before they reached the end of their first year. Of such physical conditions moral degradation was the natural concomitant. The husband frequented the public-house rather than the noisome den which served him for a home, the wife became slatternly and careless; the daughter, seeing the sights she saw where a whole family slept in a single room, grew up without a sense of decency; the son mingled with vicious boys in alleys and cellars; and the children of the Irish boy and girl too often found their way to the brothel, the asylum, and the jail.<sup>4</sup> Fortunately, not all

<sup>1</sup> Maguire, p. 186.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 188, 192.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 208.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* 223-33.

the Irish emigrants who remained in the cities thus trod the road to ruin, for some rose superior to their surroundings and by industry and sobriety acquired wealth. Many also, when they had saved a little, left the cities; and in 1870 there was not a State or territory of the American Republic in which Irishmen had not secured a foothold. They were weak in Florida and North Carolina and in Arizona, and in New Mexico still weaker; but in Massachusetts and Pennsylvania they were in great strength, and the State of New York they could almost call their own.<sup>1</sup> As early as 1825 there were Irish settlers in California—miners, farmers, stock-raisers; and when gold was discovered, the Irish were prominent among the new-comers. They played no inconsiderable part in the early history of San Francisco, and progressed so rapidly in that city that in time they were a fourth of its inhabitants and possessed a fourth of its wealth.<sup>2</sup>

These Irish emigrants thus scattered over the United States were mostly Catholics, and as such were confronted with special difficulties. Although the Catholic Assembly of Maryland in 1649 passed an Act giving freedom of religion to all, and New York under a Catholic Mayor followed, in 1683, the lead of Maryland,<sup>3</sup> the Protestants in 1699 refused all toleration to Catholics in New York. Up to 1775 the 5th of November was called Pope Day, and on that day every good Protestant burned the Pope in effigy; and in the Eastern States the Catholics were denied the rights of citizenship, excepting only Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, and Delaware.<sup>4</sup> Washington prohibited the Pope Day celebration in his army, and in 1790 gratefully acknowledged the aid given by Catholic France.<sup>5</sup> By that date there were nearly 16,000 Catholics in Maryland alone, and in 1808 there was a Catholic Archbishop of Baltimore, John Carroll, a man of Irish descent. The first Catholic Bishop of Richmond was Irish, as were also the second Bishop of Boston, the two first

<sup>1</sup> Bagenal, pp. 30-33.

<sup>2</sup> Maguire, pp. 264-78.

<sup>3</sup> Shea's *Catholic History of the United States*, pp. 1, 70, 91-92.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* ii. 160.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* 351.



Bishops of New York, and the two first Bishops of Philadelphia ; and the first Bishop of Charlestown was Dr. England from Cork, so remarkable for his eloquence and zeal.<sup>1</sup> At the first Council of Baltimore in 1833 there were ten bishops, and at that date there were 300 priests in the United States. At the second Council in 1852 there were six archbishops and twenty-six bishops, while the number of priests throughout the United States had risen to 1385.<sup>2</sup> Many of the Irish no doubt had lost their faith, but, on the other hand, not a few had made heroic efforts to preserve it.

It was contrary to the Declaration of Independence that any religion should be persecuted, and the services of Irish Catholics in the Revolutionary war and in that of 1812 ought to have protected them from attack. But the spirit of bigotry is not easily exorcised, and not a few in the United States viewed the progress of Catholicity with dismay. Fed by calumnies from Great Britain, Protestant ascendancy in America became insolent and aggressive, and in many directions a No Popery cry was heard.<sup>3</sup> In 1839 a Catholic Convent was attacked at Baltimore, and was saved from destruction only by the intervention of armed troops.<sup>4</sup> At Charlestown, in the diocese of Boston, the Ursuline Convent was burned to the ground, the nuns and pupils driven forth, the coffins in the graveyard torn up, even the consecrated hosts taken from the sacred vessel and scattered about.<sup>5</sup> In 1844 a Protestant Association was formed at Philadelphia to save America from the abominations of Popery ; and while a Catholic Church was being burned down by infuriated bigots, a band played the Orange air, "The Boyne Water."<sup>6</sup> Ten years later the No Popery cry was again clamorously raised, and the secret society of the Know-Nothings came into existence. It was ostensibly to protect American institutions, but in reality it was to have a monopoly of everything for Protestants. One of its articles provided that no political office should be given to any except a native-born Protestant,

<sup>1</sup> Shea, iii. 306-29.

<sup>2</sup> Maguire, pp. 442-3.

<sup>3</sup> Shea, iii. 420-21.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* 448-9.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* 474-82.

<sup>6</sup> Maguire, p. 433.

who, moreover, must not have married a Catholic. And Know-Nothings who were in positions of influence were bound by oath to "remove all foreigners and Roman Catholics from office," nor were they in any case to appoint such.<sup>1</sup> The better class of American Protestants, who respected American institutions and venerated the memory of Washington, shrank from association with such a movement; but it is nevertheless true that in many parts of America, and by many classes, Catholics were regarded with aversion, and that of all Catholics the Irish were the most hated and despised.<sup>2</sup>

Much of this prejudice disappeared in the war of Secession. That such a war was bound to come could have been easily foreseen, with such conflicting views between the Northern and Southern States. The Northerners regarded all men as equal, and looked askance at such an institution as slavery in a land of freedom. The Southerners, in good part descended from old French and English families, had inherited aristocratic tendencies, and still clinging to class privilege and social grades, thought it quite right that the master should be a freeman and the servant a slave. In the North it was held that as slaves were persons their liberty as such should be guaranteed by law. Down South, in the tobacco and cotton fields of Virginia or Alabama, it was strenuously maintained that slaves were property, and therefore that slavery must not only be tolerated but protected. And thus while the Democrats of the South wanted a law protecting slavery, the Republicans of the North wanted a law prohibiting it as out of keeping with American institutions. The Southerners also maintained that each State was supreme within its own borders, and could freely secede from as it had freely joined the United States. The Northern maintained that the concession of any such power to individual States would be to strike a fatal blow at National unity. As neither side would give way, eleven of the Southern States seceded, set up a Southern Confederacy, organized an army and navy, and in April 1861 attacked and captured Fort Sumter, near Charlestown, then garrisoned by United

<sup>1</sup> Maguire, pp. 446-7.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 450.



States' troops. And thus began a great struggle which called nearly two millions of armed men into the field, in which at least 600,000 lives were lost, and which cost nearly £1,600,000,000.

The Irish were more numerous in the Northern than in the Southern States, and were not slow to range themselves on the side of National Union. But there were Irishmen in the Southern States, who, though disliking secession and hating slavery, thought that to their own State their allegiance was due first of all. They resented having that State coerced by the Government at Washington, and believed that the supreme sovereignty of each individual State was the very foundation of civil liberty. Therefore there were Irish soldiers on both sides, and more than once they met in actual conflict; and from the first battle to the last they maintained the traditional valour of their race. Among the ablest of the Southern generals were Hill and Early and M'Gowan, all of Irish descent; while Cleyburne, bravest and best-beloved of all by the soldiers, was born in Cork. Ever remarkable for vigilance and activity, for coolness in action and headlong valour in a charge, he fell in 1864 at the head of his troops, and by the whole army none was more regretted than he.<sup>1</sup> As for the Irish rank and file their commanders readily admitted that they were the best of all soldiers—cheerful, cleanly, courageous, enduring privations without a murmur, and ready to attack any position and face any danger.

On the Northern side it was calculated that 150,000 Irish fought. Generals Carey, Griffin, and Butler were of Irish descent, and so also was General Sheridan, the most brilliant cavalry officer of his age. His services were especially noteworthy. He had a prominent part in the bloody battle of Murfreesboro in Tennessee; he ably seconded the efforts of Grant at Missionary Ridge and in the battles of the Wilderness; and towards the close of the war he carried Five Forks, captured all the Confederate cavalry, and was with Grant at the

<sup>1</sup> O'Hanlon's *Irish-American History*, pp. 402-3; Maguire, pp. 581-5, 643-9; Fitzhugh Lee's *General Lee*, pp. 351-2.

surrender of Lee.<sup>1</sup> Yet it was in the purely Irish regiments, in Corcoran's 69th regiment or in the Irish Brigade under Meagher, that the finest heroism of the war was displayed. Corcoran's regiment embodied in the early part of the war was Irish and Catholic to a man, numbering about 1800 men. At the first battle of Bull Run they behaved with conspicuous gallantry. Their Commander-Colonel Corcoran was taken prisoner, and when released in the following year, he organized Corcoran's Legion, and until he was killed by a fall from his horse in 1863, he did good service with the Army of the Potomac.<sup>2</sup> But meanwhile General Meagher, the brilliant Young Ireland orator of 1848 who had taken command of the Irish Brigade, had done much and was destined to do still more in the days to come. In May 1862 the Northerners under M'Clellan took possession of Norfolk and the mouth of the James River, pushed their gunboats up the river, captured Mechanicsville on land, and hoped to have the Confederate capital, Richmond, soon effectually invested both by land and sea. But their plans were foiled by the energy and celerity of the Southerners, whose batteries on the river drove back the advancing gunboats, and who, under the able leadership of General Johnston, were no less successful on land. On the last day of May Johnston was severely wounded, his place being taken by General Lee, a far abler man. For some weeks there was a lull, but in the middle of June large reinforcements had been sent to M'Clellan, and Stonewall Jackson, little inferior to Lee himself, had come up with his army to the assistance of Lee. In the terrible seven days' battle, or rather series of battles round Richmond, the advantage remained with the Southerners, for M'Clellan was compelled to raise the siege of Richmond and retire with heavy loss beyond the Rappahannock and the Potomac. During these days and nights of retreat, Meagher and the Irish Brigade covered themselves with glory. Their duty was to cover the retreat, and in consequence they were unwearingly engaged. They held the

<sup>1</sup> O'Hanlon, pp. 449-50, 520, 535, 611, 615; General P. H. Sheridan's *Personal Memoirs*.

<sup>2</sup> O'Hanlon, p. 381.



bridge over the Chickahominy while their comrades safely passed over ; they charged the pursuing Southernns up to the very mouth of their guns, and when at last M'Clellan could breathe in safety beyond the James River, many a gallant Irishman had fallen.<sup>1</sup>

In August Stonewall Jackson inflicted a severe defeat on the Northernns at the second battle of Bull Run, and then, in conjunction with Lee, he crossed the Potomac into Maryland and threatened Washington.<sup>2</sup> But at the hard-fought battle of Antietam in the following month the advantage was with M'Clellan, and Lee recrossed the Potomac into Virginia. Meagher having been wounded in the battle, his place was taken by another Irishman, Colonel Burke, whose coolness and bravery in action extorted the special admiration of the *Compte de Paris*.<sup>3</sup> The attenuated ranks of the Irish were soon filled by fresh arrivals, and at Fredericksburg in December, again under Meagher, they performed prodigies of valour. M'Clellan had then been superseded, his place being given to General Burnside, who had under him an army of 150,000 men. Lee had but 80,000, but the advantage of position was with him ; he had strongly entrenched himself, and on every commanding position powerful batteries had been placed. The attack was made by the Northernns from the left bank of the Rappahannock. Lee held the town of Fredericksburg, which was on the right, but offered no great resistance to the enemy's crossing of the river or to their capturing of the town. It was not there he had determined to make his stand, but on the heights at the rear, one of which, Marye's Hill, was the key of his position. It was approached by a ravine, and across the ascending hill Lee had placed two stone breastworks behind which his riflemen were placed. The approach through the ravine was also swept by powerful batteries. Had Burnside properly reconnoitered the position he would have seen that it was impossible of capture by a frontal attack. Yet he determined to attack it and assigned the duty to the Irish Brigade. They must have known

<sup>1</sup> O'Hanlon, pp. 410-19 ; General Lee, pp. 151-64.

<sup>2</sup> General Lee, 188-202.

<sup>3</sup> O'Hanlon, pp. 445-6.

that they were marching to destruction, but, as true soldiers, they never hesitated for a moment when ordered to advance.

What followed is well described by a Confederate General, who was an eye-witness. "In our immediate front," he says, "one could walk on the dead for hundreds of yards. We were pained to see the noble fellows coming up in steady columns to be mowed down by our lines of solid flames of fire from our entrenched position behind the rock wall and the terrible fire from the Washington artillery, commanding every inch of approach. The Irish Brigade would receive our well-directed fire, steady and firm, and when great gaps were cut through their ranks by the artillery, would reform under the incessant fire, come again, sink down and rise again, trample the dead and wounded under foot, and press the stone wall of liquid fire, then recede a few feet, and come again like an avalanche into the very jaws of death, until strength and endurance failed, having been forced back by shell and the deadly Minie ball that no human being could withstand." Not less flattering is the testimony of the *Times* correspondent. "Never at Fontenoy, at Albuera, or at Waterloo was more undoubted courage displayed by the sons of Erin than during the six frantic dashes which they directed against the almost impregnable position of their foe. The bodies which lie in dense masses within forty yards of the muzzles of Colonel Walton's guns are the best evidence of what manner of men they were who pressed on to death with the dauntlessness of a race which has gained glory on a thousand battle-fields, and never more richly deserved than at the foot of Marye's Heights on the 13th of December 1862." The slaughter was terrible, and when night came, out of the 1200 Irishmen who made the attack, only 200 remained.<sup>1</sup> It was such things as these that spread confusion among the Know-Nothings, and caused every true American to see that Irish Catholics were good citizens and gallant soldiers ready to shed their blood in defence of American liberty.

<sup>1</sup> O'Hanlon, pp. 459-60 ; Bagenal, p. 139 ; Maguire, pp. 578-9 ; Lee, pp. 222-32.



But in addition there was the devotion and self-sacrifice of priests and nuns during the war. From press and platform and pulpit the most shocking calumnies had been circulated about both. They were intriguing, self-seeking, avaricious, wicked, and vile, hating those who professed a different faith, strangers on American soil, giving their allegiance to a foreign power. A No-Popery bigot, anxious to travel by a steamer, objected to travel in the same cabin with a Catholic priest, and threatened if put into the same cabin to fling the priest into the sea. There were Protestants who believed that to kill a Catholic priest or burn down a Catholic church would be doing a most acceptable service to God ; and a Tennessee alderman considered it "doing an honour to the Deity to take his double-barrelled gun and shoot any Catholic he might meet." Priests were often treated with disrespect, and nuns, as they walked the streets, were sometimes insulted, and not a few honest Protestants regarded them with aversion and even terror. Amid the smoke of battle and in the hospital wards much of this bitter feeling passed away, for the priest poured words of consolation into the ear of the dying while the shells hissed and the bullets whizzed around him. And round the ambulance waggons, in the hospitals, and in the prisons, the nuns came and went, whispering words of consolation and hope, walking with noiseless tread and touching with an angel's hand. Like the Master whom they served, they went about doing good, seeking no earthly reward, heeding no insult, making no distinction of party or creed, and knowing that it was expected of a Christian to extend mercy and charity to all. Their looks full of compassion, their hearts filled with pity, their only anxiety was to relieve suffering, to soothe the fevered brow, to moisten the lips that were dry, to staunch the gaping wound. They procured rations for the hungry soldiers and medicine for him who was ill, and, casting aside their natural timidity, they boldly arraigned the doctor who neglected his duty. Under the influence of these sights and scenes the heart of the infidel and bigot was softened, the look of aversion gave way to one of veneration and gratitude,

and often, as the last moment came creeping on, the light of faith dawned in a soul hitherto darkened by unbelief. How many conversions were thus effected? how many, grateful to the sister, were willing to believe what she believed? how many poured benedictions upon her name? how many sent their letters of thanks and their presents from every State and city of the great republic? After the war, insulting priests or nuns became a rare occurrence. On the contrary, as the sister passed she was saluted with respect; when she entered the steamer or railroad car the soldier, maimed and battle-scarred, rose and eagerly proffered her his seat, and as he recounted to his fellow-passengers what he had seen in the military hospitals or military prisons his voice shook with emotion and his eyes filled with tears. After the war the Irish Catholic was no longer regarded as an alien, but as a good citizen and a gallant soldier, attached to the land of his adoption, and ready to die in its defence.<sup>1</sup>

Owing to the wisdom and magnanimity of the conquerors in the great struggle the wounds inflicted on the conquered soon healed, and the bitter memories of defeat were effaced. But even a rich country found the cost of the war to press heavily, and the too rapid construction of railways left millions of money for a time unproductive, and led to the financial crisis of 1873. Yet the resources of the country were so vast that recovery was rapid. In addition to the gold-mines of California others were discovered at Colorado, silver was found in Nevada, inexhaustible petroleum wells in Pennsylvania, and the coal deposits covered an area six times as extensive as Ireland. But, further, there was the resource, the inventiveness, the boundless energy of the people. "The country whose population has been developing within 280 years already owned one-third of the world's mining, one-fourth of its manufactures, one-fifth of its agriculture, and at least one-sixth of the world's wealth is already concentrated in the strip of territory in Central North America which has the name of the United States."<sup>2</sup> This described the condition of things

<sup>1</sup> Maguire, pp. 448-87.    <sup>2</sup> *Encyclopædia Britannica*, article "United States."



in 1880. In the year that followed the same rate of progress was maintained, and in the year 1900 the value of the mining products alone was equal to £200,000,000. From 1850 to 1897 the population of the New England States had almost doubled, that of the Middle States had trebled, that of the Southern States almost trebled, that of the Prairie States quadrupled, and the progress of the Pacific States was described as marvellous. The total population, which in 1860 was but 31,000,000, in 1900 had reached 76,000,000.<sup>1</sup>

The Irish had their own share in producing these marvellous results. From 1860 the yearly number of Irish immigrants was never below 60,000, and some years was nearly twice that amount; from 1820 to 1870 the yearly average was 44,000, and the average since then has at least been 30,000.<sup>2</sup> Too many of these remained in the Eastern cities, and in the unhealthy atmosphere of the city tenement they fell victims to drink and disease. Not a few, however, prospered, and in the second generation they rose to the highest positions. Those who went West did splendid work as pioneers. They cleared the woods, drained the swamps, made the roads, and turned the prairie into grain-producing fields. Often it was Irish hands that built the railroad and spanned the river, and laid the telegraph wire, and drove the train and the tram-car, that went down the mining-shaft, or drove the herd of cattle over the prairie; and not infrequently the Irishman sat in the judge's seat, or in the editor's chair, or, as a great advocate, pleaded before an American jury with all the moving eloquence of his race. In the Catholic Church they were especially prominent. "If we turn," said Dr. Spalding, "to explain this rebirth of Catholicism among the English-speaking peoples, we must at once admit that the Irish race is the providential instrument through which God has wrought this marvellous revival. They have given to Catholicism in the country a

<sup>1</sup> *Encyclopædia Britannica*; *North American Review*, May, June, July, and September 1897—articles by Mr. Mulhall, the well-known statistician.

<sup>2</sup> *Encyclopædia Britannica*, article "Ireland."

vigour and cohesiveness which enable it to assimilate the most heterogeneous elements, and without which it is not at all certain that the vast majority of Catholics emigrating hither from other lands would not have been lost to the Church." <sup>1</sup>

The money which the Irish labourer or the Irish servant-girl earned so hard was given ungrudgingly to build church or orphanage or school, and all over the land Irish priests ministered to the people of their own blood. The first Bishop of Pittsburg was a Cork man, Michael O'Connor; the second Bishop of Savannah was John Barry of Wexford; the Archbishop of Cincinnati was the Irishman Purcell, and in St. Louis was an Irish Archbishop named Kenrick; in New York a M'Cluskey succeeded a Hughes, and in Chicago diocese the Irishman Duggan succeeded the Irishman Antony O'Regan.<sup>2</sup> At the present day (1909) a Gibbons, raised to the purple of a Roman Cardinal, rules at Baltimore; a Ryan, most eloquent of archbishops, rules at Philadelphia; and an O'Riordan wields the archbishop's crozier by the waters of the Pacific. Under these and other archbishops and bishops there are thousands of Irish nuns labouring with the piety of St. Bridget, and Irish priests zealous as St. Columbanus or St. Columba. At the head of the Catholic University of Washington the Irishman, Dr. Conaty, was succeeded by another Irishman, Dr. O'Connell, to be succeeded in turn by a well-known historical scholar with the unmistakably Irish name of Shahan. In the editor's chair of one of the most influential of American newspapers there lately sat the genial Irishman, Rev. T. E. Judge, D.D., cut off all too soon, just as his splendid intellectual powers had reached their prime. And in the city by the Golden Gate one of the stoutest champions of the Catholic Church is the famous Galwayman, Rev. P. C. Yorke, D.D. With a gift of oratory which places him on a level with the most eloquent of living Irishmen, either in the old world or in the new, and with intellectual capacity and an extent of knowledge which would adorn the highest position in the American Church, he has for truth and justice the zeal of

<sup>1</sup> Bagenal, pp. 64-5.

<sup>2</sup> Shea, vol. iv.



Savonarola, and for injustice the *sava indignatio* of Swift. The venal official trembles before him as the trenchant assailant of corruption; the grasping capitalist fears him as the acknowledged champion of the toiler; the traducer of Ireland fears him, for his wrath is terrible when his native land is unjustly assailed; and when a clique of men on the Pacific sea-board, forming themselves into the Anti-Popery Society, revived the slanders of Know-Nothingism, Dr. Yorke poured upon them such a lava tide of scorn that they retired from the contest beaten and disgraced. With such zeal and ability as this employed in the service of the Catholic Church and of Ireland, it is little wonder that the Church has grown and prospered in the West of the Atlantic, as it is little wonder that the United States has come to be known as the Greater Ireland beyond the sea.

Concurrently with the outward flow to America during the century there was also a stream of emigration from Ireland to Australia, though not so broad and deep as that which flowed West. But the earliest who went to Australia were involuntary exiles, for it was then a penal settlement, and thither were sent the rebels of 1798, the Threshers and Ribbonmen of a later date, and the Young Irelanders of 1848. Cruel beyond measure was their fate. Many of them were men of education, pure of life and noble of character, with unselfish aims and lofty ideals, whose only crime was that they loved their country well and had sacrificed their liberty in its defence. Yet on the long voyage to the Southern Sea they were on shipboard herded with the vilest of the vile, with the desperadoes of English cities, the off-scourings of British prisons. At table, in sleeping-room, and exercise-yard they had to associate with the reprieved murderer, the wife-beater, the swindler, the successful forger, and the unsuccessful assassin—men in whose mouths there was always an obscene word, and to whom virtue was a matter for ridicule.<sup>1</sup> And

<sup>1</sup> See Marcus Clarke's *For the Term of his Natural Life*, which gives a terrible picture of convict life on shipboard and on land. He is a writer of fiction, but in this book he writes of "events which have actually occurred."

often some petty tyrant, armed with Government authority and animated by racial and religious prejudice, treated the Irish political prisoners with far greater severity than the vilest criminal on board.

The same injustice was continued on land, and when the convicts were cast ashore at Sydney or in Van Dieman's Land, the British bully, who had to his account a hideous catalogue of crimes, was treated with leniency while the Irishman was watched and thwarted at every turn. The magistrate or military Governor, knowing that the Irishman had plotted sedition at home, assumed that he was still anxious to plot sedition abroad, and at heart was disloyal to British rule; and in his case the privileges were fewer than in other cases, the surveillance more strict, and the punishment more severe. In spite of his previous good conduct Holt, the Wicklow insurgent leader, on mere suspicion of being concerned in some meditated outbreak among the prisoners, was deported from Sydney to Norfolk Island, where the roughest work and the most brutal treatment was his share. An Irish lad of twenty, named Paddy Galvin, because he refused to reveal where some pikes were supposed to be concealed, was given 300 lashes. After the first hundred his shoulder-blades were laid bare, the second hundred reduced the middle of his back to pulp, and the last hundred he received on the calves of his legs. Another Irishman named Fitzgerald also received 300 lashes, and Holt, who was present and who had seen the horrors of 1798 in Ireland, declared that he had never seen a more revolting scene. Two men did the flogging, and with as much regularity as two threshers in a barn. "The day was windy, and I protest that though I was at least fifteen yards to leeward, the blood and flesh blew in my face as the executioners shook it off from their cats."<sup>1</sup>

These Irishmen were mostly Catholics, and as such had known what it was to belong to a despised creed. But the era of penal legislation was over in Ireland, and at home the Irish Catholics were free to practise their religion. In the penal settlements of Sydney and Van Diemen's Land they

<sup>1</sup> Holt's *Memoirs*, ii. 118-22.



were again face to face with the evil past. Only the Protestant religion would be tolerated, and when Sunday came, the Catholics must go to the Protestant church or be flogged; and many a flogging did the poor Catholic convicts thus receive. Among the first batch from Ireland were three priests wrongfully punished, as was afterwards discovered, for complicity in the rebellion of 1798. These were Father O'Neil of Youghal, Father Dixon of Wexford, and Father Harold of Dublin. Father O'Neil was soon sent back to Ireland by the Government. The other two were for a time allowed to say mass, but the permission was soon withdrawn, and both were sent back to Ireland, leaving the Catholics again no minister of their own faith, and no option but to attend the Protestant service.<sup>1</sup> In 1817 an Irish priest who knew the Irish language and often preached in it volunteered for Sydney. But neither his religion nor his language would be allowed in a penal settlement where speaking a word of Irish was punished with fifty lashes, and he too was sent away.<sup>2</sup>

But the sky cannot be always dark and the storm must cease to blow, and at last there came the sunshine and the calm. In 1820 two Cork priests, Father Therry and Connolly, arrived in Sydney and were permitted by the authorities to minister to their co-religionists.<sup>3</sup> In 1836, chiefly owing to the representations of the Governor, Sir Richard Bourke, the vexatious monopoly of Protestantism ceased, and an Act was passed giving complete religious toleration to all creeds. At that date New South Wales had for some years a Legislative Council, partly elective and partly nominated by the Crown, but in 1856 this gave way to a freely elected Parliament and a Government responsible to the people. Meanwhile also, owing to constant agitation both at Sydney and in Van Diemen's Land, transportation of convicts to Australia ceased. Among those who thus agitated not a few were free immigrants from Ireland. In the ten years from 1842 to 1852 a yearly average of 2500 Irish had come; in the next ten years the average rose to 11,500; in the next ten years it was 8000;

<sup>1</sup> Hogan, pp. 226-31.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 233-6.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 236-8.

and from 1871 to 1880 it was 6000. Since then there has been a falling off, the highest in any one year being 1005—for the year 1899.<sup>1</sup> Nor have the Irish been behindhand in developing Australian resources, in building up Australian cities, and in shaping Australian destinies, whether they first came to Australia as convicts or as freemen. As in America too many of them remained in the cities, and some of these fared ill. But others prospered as artizans, as shopkeepers, as contractors, and not a few, wisely investing their savings in building-ground, rapidly acquired wealth. For those who went into the rural districts nothing was required but sobriety and thrift. The Glenveigh tenants, thrown upon the roadside in Donegal, were in 1863 reported to be doing well in Victoria. And Father Dunne, who brought as many as 6000 evicted from Munster, and got land for them from the Queensland Government, saw them exchange comfort and contentment abroad for discontent and poverty at home.<sup>2</sup>

Among the educated classes the success of the Irish has been remarkable, and in medicine and engineering, in art and science, in literature and law, an Irishman has often held the premier place. Three Irishmen in succession have been Governors of New South Wales, two Irishmen have been Premiers, another has been Chief-Justice, another Attorney-General, while another has held the foremost place at the Bar. In South Australia also three Irishmen in succession have filled the position of Governor. Another was Lieutenant-Governor of Queensland. In Victoria three Irishmen have been Premiers, two have been Speakers, two have been Chief-Justices.<sup>3</sup> It was an Irishman, Peter Lalor, who led the revolt of the miners at Ballarat against the capricious tyranny of a Governor. He died in 1889 as the Hon. Peter Lalor, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, his funeral being attended by the Governor of Victoria and the members of the Victorian Ministry.<sup>4</sup>

In every colony the Irish have been the mainstay of the

<sup>1</sup> *Encyclopædia Britannica*, article "Ireland."

<sup>2</sup> Hogan, pp. 157-63.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 302-27.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* 70-77, Davitt's *Life and Progress in Australia*, p. 157.



Catholic Church ; indeed if the Irish were taken away the Catholic Church would be non-existent on Australian soil. It is the Irish who have built the churches and orphanages and schools, as it is they who have supplied the nuns and bishops and priests. At Sydney a noted Irishman rules as Cardinal Archbishop, a scholar to whom every student of Irish history owes much. At Melbourne one Irish-born Archbishop has been succeeded by another. At Adelaide the Archbishop O'Reilly hails from Kilkenny ; at Hobart the Archbishop Delaney hails from Galway ; and Murray and Lanigan, and Moore and Doyle and Murphy are the names—unmistakably Irish—which other Australian bishops bear.<sup>1</sup> Loyal to their several colonies the Irish are, because they are under a free Government and can prosper and thrive ; and they are loyal to the Church of their fathers, and are characteristically generous in its support. And not less loyal they are to the little island far away in the Northern sea. In every city and town there is a St. Patrick's Hall, or an Irish Hall, or a Hibernian Hall where the children of Ireland love to meet ; where the lecture on Ireland arouses enthusiasm, where the delegate arrived from Ireland is sure of a warm welcome, and where, when the songs of Ireland are sung, there is a thrill through the Irish heart and a tear in the Irish eye. In the streets of Melbourne a party of freshly-arrived Irish immigrants were seen to open a little box they had brought with them containing just one green sod of Irish earth. The sight caused an old woman among the older settlers to cross herself devoutly, and the eyes of the others glistened with tears.<sup>2</sup> And away at the mining settlement of Charters Towers, two thousand miles beyond Sydney, Mr. Davitt, on entering a convent, was charmed to hear the pupils sing "The Wearing of the Green" and "Come back to Erin."<sup>3</sup> Taught by Irish nuns, these children thus learned to love the land of their fathers, though they had never seen and probably never would see its shores.

In other lands also Irishmen have found a home, in South Africa, and in the Argentine Republic, and nearer home the

<sup>1</sup> *Catholic Directories*.

<sup>2</sup> Hogan, pp. 147-8.

<sup>3</sup> Davitt, p. 126.

number of Irish is large in the cities and towns of Great Britain. In the present generation an Irish Protestant has been Lord Chancellor of England and an Irish Catholic Lord Chief-Justice, and Irishmen have been and are among the brightest ornaments of the English Bar. An Irish Commander-in-Chief has been succeeded by another Irishman, neither of them, unlike Wellington, ashamed of his Irish blood ; and in the navy and diplomatic service, and in the higher posts of the Civil Service, Irishmen have served England well. Throughout England and Scotland there are clergymen and doctors, Irish still to their heart's core, who are honoured by the town or city in which they live ; and not unfrequently it has happened that the poor Irish working-man who settled in England has prospered, perhaps reached a prominent position in his adopted town. But there is the other side to the picture too. How many Irishmen coming to Great Britain poor remain poor all their days ! how many go down in the struggle ! how many become waifs and wastrels in the cities and towns ! how many lose the faith which their ancestors held so dear ! how many have to endure hardships and privations worse even than misery and a mud-cabin at home ! And every patriotic Irishman would wish to end that annual exodus to the harvest fields of England. Treated on train and steamer like so many cattle, these migratory labourers have often to live in England in cattle-sheds and barns. Tolerated rather than encouraged, they are looked down upon as belonging to an alien race and creed ; and as they are met with at an English railway station, toil-worn, travel-stained, and poor, they are pathetic figures with the wistful look of the Irish exile in their eyes. But it is the United States above all which is draining Ireland of its life-blood. Those who go to Australia or South Africa, to Canada or the Argentine Republic, are but few ; and of those who go to Great Britain the greater number go but to return. But to the United States there is a steady and continuous stream of more than 30,000 a year. It is this terrible drain, which nothing seems able to stem, which is responsible for the continued diminution of the population, so that Ireland, which



in 1861 had nearly six millions of people, has now less than four millions and a half.<sup>1</sup> Worse than all, more than three-fourths of those who go are between the ages of fifteen and thirty-five. It is the strong and healthy and enterprising who go, the persons with initiative and ambition, leaving behind them the weak of body and mind. Of those who reach America healthy and strong some indeed succeed, but others go down in the struggle, wasted by exhausting labour, by keen competition, by difficult climatic conditions. A small portion, especially the girls, come back to Ireland, but how woefully changed ! Still young, the elasticity has left their step, the light has gone from their eye, the roses have faded from their cheeks ; and the beautiful girl who left Ireland but a few years before has returned prematurely old, perhaps to die, or it may be to get married at home and become the mother of unhealthy children. And thus the exodus to America is responsible not merely for the diminution, but also for the deterioration of the race. How to induce the people to remain at home is a question which demands the most serious thought of our public men ; for it is evident that if the present exodus continues unchecked, the Irish race in Ireland is doomed.

<sup>1</sup> *Catholic Directories.*





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